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Alexander Agricola

Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus

Herausgegeben
von
Nicole Schwindt

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Einführung

Nicole Schwindt

»Clarus vocum manuumque« – Alexander Agricola, Komponieren zwischen den Stühlen[*]

Für einen Musiker der vorbarocken Zeit war es durchaus nicht selbstverständlich, dass er ein Instrument spielte. Für Sänger bzw. Komponisten war dies womöglich eher die Ausnahme als die Regel. Von manchen Komponisten wissen wir es (eher durch historische Randnotizen): etwa dass Orlando di Lasso im 16. Jahrhundert, wahrscheinlich auch Hayne van Ghizeghem hundert Jahre früher Laute spielten,[1] oder dass Nicolaus Krombsdorfer nicht nur ein hervorragender Spieler, sondern auch exzellenter Sänger war (»cantor et pulsator excellentissimo«), so dass er in seltener Persunalunion die Posten des Organisten, Sängers und Kapellmeisters einnehmen konnte.[2] Von den meisten wissen wir nichts, gelegentlich wissen wir von ihnen aber auch, dass sie nichts spielten. Leonhard Lechner, der hundert Jahre später als Alexander Agricola, nämlich 1606, starb, bezeugte selbst in einem Brief, er beherrsche kein Instrument.[3] Noch war das Vokale nicht nur eine allgemeine ästhetische Orientierungsgröße, sondern ein autonomer Wert, ja, ein absoluter Wert, der keiner Ergänzung bedurfte.

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[*] Die Beiträge des vorliegenden Bandes geben in überarbeiteter Form die Referate wieder, die am 28. April 2006 beim gleichnamigen Symposium anlässlich des 500. Todesjahres Alexander Agricolas in der Musikhochschule Trossingen gehalten wurden. Die Tagung wurde dankenswerterweise von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft unterstützt.

[1] Massimo Troiano, *Die Münchner Fürstenhochzeit von 1568*, hrsg. und übersetzt von Horst Leuchtmann, München 1980 (Studien zur Landes- und Sozialgeschichte der Musik, 4), S. 313. In Guillaume Crétins Trauergedicht auf Johannes Ockeghem heißt es, Hayne habe als Mitglied des Himmelschores »Ut heremita solus« zur Laute gesungen, um Ockeghem bei seiner Ankunft im Himmel zu begrüßen: »Hame en la fin dict avecques son lucz Ce motet, ut heremita solus« (*Œuvres poétiques*, hrsg. von Kathleen Chesney, Paris 1932, Reprint Genf 1977, Vers 221f.); angesichts der höchst komplexen Faktur der Komposition rief schon Reinhard Strohm (*The Rise of European Music, 1380–1500*, Cambridge 1993, S. 480) aus: »It is unlikely indeed that anyone on earth could play the piece on the lute!« Es handelte sich wohl um eine poetische Metapher, die allerdings bewusst verwendet worden sein dürfte, denn das anonyme Lied »La plus grant chière« bestätigt, dass Hayne und Robert Morton auf leisen Instrumenten spielten und sangen (»... sur bas instrumens à planté ont joué et si fort chanté ...«), siehe *A Florentine Chansonnier from the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Banco rari 229*, hrsg. von Howard Mayer Brown, Chicago 1983 (Monuments of Renaissance Music, 7), Music Volume, S. 147.

[2] Als Niccolò Tedesco war er in Ferrara ca. 1436 bis 1462 tätig und trat 1463 in den Dienst Sigismunds von Tirol, siehe Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505. The Creation of a Musical Center in the Fifteenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass. 1984 (Studies in the History of Music, 2), S. 161 und öfter.

Die Dichotomie »vokal – instrumental«, die auch der Denkfigur »Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus« zu Grunde liegt, ist eine Konstruktion späterer Zeit. Nicht dass die Kategorien der mit menschlicher Stimme gesungenen und mit artifiziellen Klangwerkzeugen gespielten Musik nicht auseinander gehalten worden wären – schon Aristides Quintilianus führt um 400 n. Chr. separate Ordnungen für die Lehre von der menschlichen Stimme (μέλος ῴδιχόν) und die Lehre von den Instrumenten (μέλος όργανιχόν) ein,[4] gefolgt von den diversen mittelalterlichen Klassifikationen eines Isidor von Sevilla oder Regino von Prüm, die jeweils eigene Sparten für die von technischen Geräten erzeugte *musica organica* bzw. *artificialis* kennen.[5] Doch das genau ist der Unterschied: Sie halten Vokal- und Instrumentalmusik auseinander. Dass sie in ein Wechselverhältnis treten, sich gegenseitig inspirieren (sei es durch Abgrenzung, sei es durch Annäherung), wird noch nicht reflektiert. Ganz charakteristisch wird diese traditionelle Vorstellung beispielsweise von Guillaume Crétin in eine poetische Szenenanordnung umgemünzt. In seinem berühmtem Deplorationsgedicht auf Johannes Ockeghem, das im Himmel spielt und wo Ockeghem bei seiner Ankunft von der Kollegenschaft empfangen wird, heißt es: »tous instrumentz cesserent, Et sur ce poinct les chantres commencerent« (»alle Instrumente beendeten ihr Spiel und in diesem Augenblick begannen die Sänger«).[6]

Vor diesem Hintergrund lässt eine Formulierung, wie sie der Beginn des Epitaphgedichts auf den Musiker Alexander Agricola enthält, aufhorchen. In Dialogform heißt es dort:

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[3] Brief vom 1. März 1596; siehe Klaus Aringer, Art. »Lechner, Leonhard«, in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2. Aufl., hrsg. von Ludwig Finscher, Personenteil, Bd. 10, Kassel und Stuttgart 2003, Sp. 1409.

[4] Zusätzlich zur Lehre vom Melos und der Lehre vom Rhythmus, siehe Heinrich Hüschen, Art. »Musik«, in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, hrsg. von Friedrich Blume, Bd. 9, Kassel 1961, Sp. 980.

[5] Ebda. Dagegen bezieht sich Boethius' Begriff der *musica instrumentalis* auf die menschlich erzeugte und damit wirklich erklingende Musik, wie sie sich etwa noch in der dreifache differenzierenden Formulierung von Jacobus von Lüttich spiegelt: *musica* a) *mundana*, b) *humana*, c) *instrumentalis vel sonora*.

[6] G. Crétin, *Œuvres poétiques* (wie Anm. 1).

> Musica quid defles? Periit mea cura decusque.
> Estne Alexander? Is meus Agricola.
> Dic age qualis erat? Clarus vocum manuumque.
> …[7]
>
> Musik, wen beweinst du? Hin ging mein Liebling, meine Zierde.
> Ist es Alexander? Ja, mein Agricola.
> Sag, wie war er? Berühmt wegen seiner Stimme und seiner Hände.
> …

Was kann das heißen? Bisher wurde es immer als ein Hinweis darauf gelesen, dass Agricola nicht nur ein ausgezeichneter Sänger war,[8] sondern ein ebensolcher Instrumentalist, wenngleich wir keinen Hinweis darauf haben, welches Instrument er mit Händen traktierte. Rob Wegmans jüngste Zurückhaltung, der »clarus vocum manuumque« eher als Metapher begreifen will und in vorsichtiger Abstraktion mit »Renowned for his sounds and for his workmanship« übersetzt,[9] scheint mir ungerechtfertigt, wenngleich verständlich. Denn in der Tat steckt in der Koppelung der beiden Tätigkeiten Sprengstoff – eben der Sprengstoff, der die erneute Auseinandersetzung mit der Thematik anregte.

Kunstvolle Musik von Instrumenten hervorgebracht erhält im Laufe des 15. Jahrhunderts eine Bedeutung – in ihrer Quantität, in ihrer Differenziertheit, in ihrer ästhetischen Wertschätzung –, die nicht mehr in eine Sonderkategorie zu relegieren war. Vielmehr setzt sie mit ihrer faktischen Präsenz und Stärke einen nachhaltigen, noch die nächsten Jahrhunderte beschäftigenden Prozess in Gang,[10] der als kleines Indiz auch das Junktim, dass ein Sänger ein hervorragender Instrumentalist sein könne, glaubhaft macht. Ja, es scheint geradezu symptomatisch zu sein, dass eine solche Paarung für die

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[7] Zit. nach *Symphoniae jucundae atque adeo breves 4 vocum, ab optimis quibusque musicis compositae*, hrsg. von Hans Albrecht, Kassel 1959 (Georg Rhau. Musikdrucke aus den Jahren 1538–1545, 3), Nr. 49, S. 165. Zu der Hypothese, dass die Vertonung dieses Lamentos von Juan de Anchieta stammen könnte, vgl. Tess Knighton, »›Music, why do you weep?‹ A lament for Alexander Agricola (d. 1506)«, in: *Early Music* 34 (2006), S. 427–441.

[8] Das andere Epitaphgedicht (»O dure mort«) spricht traditionell vom alle Musiker überragenden Sänger (»Chantre excellent sur tous musiciens«) und dass der Tod seine triumphierende Stimme zerschlagen habe »a[s] cassé la triomphante voix« (B-Br, 14864-65, fol. 70^v); zit. nach Rob C. Wegman, »Agricola, Bordon and Obrecht at Ghent: Discoveries and Revisions«, in: *Revue belge de musicologie* 51 (1997), S. 61.

[9] Ebda., S. 49.

[10] Dagegen erkennt Louise Litterick (»On Italian Instrumental Ensemble Music in the Late Fifteenth Century«, in: *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources and Texts,* hrsg. von Iain Fenlon, Cambridge 1981, S. 117–130) keine Brücke zwischen der Instrumentalmusik des 15. und der seit der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts, als sie gewissermaßen neu erfunden werden musste.

Zeit um 1500 thematisiert wird. Voraussetzung dafür war allerdings, dass das Instrumentale sich als eigener Wert etablierte, seine Autorität nicht ausborgte (etwa prachtvolle Trompetenmusik als Symbol herrschaftlicher Macht, nicht per se als Musik).[11] Die Sprengkraft liegt nun weniger in dem, was Musikgeschichte-Lehrbücher mit dem Schlagwort »Emanzipation der Instrumentalmusik« belegen, um dann auf den florierenden Sektor der selbstständigen, auch freien instrumentalen Musikarten, das Lautenpräludium, die Orgelkanzone, das Ensemblericercar etc., einzuschwenken. All das könnte noch immer unter der Flagge der mittelalterlichen Apparate-Musik mit exklusivem Status segeln, die auch die ›Ghettoisierung‹ der Instrumentalisten im Bezirk der schriftlosen Musik erlaubte, wo sie im 16. Jahrhundert in Notendrucken nicht selten als illitterate Benutzer (»che non sanno cantare«, »die nicht [notenmäßig] singen können«) gehandelt werden.[12] »Sonate, que me veux-tu?« – anachronistisch gesprochen.

Innovativ ist indes die Kombination, gegebenenfalls die Verbindung, vielleicht sogar die Synthese oder gar die Einheit der beiden Qualitäten des Vokalen und des Instrumentalen. Um Missverständnissen vorzubeugen: Es sei keinesfalls gesagt, dass das synchrone Zusammenwirken von Gesangsstimmen und Instrumenten etwas Neues sei (obwohl – dies in Parenthese – seit Christopher Page und David Fallows die selbstverständliche Annahme einer lustig-unbekümmerten Mischung von Gesang und Spiel in Ensembledarbietungen des 15. Jahrhunderts bedrohlich demontiert wurde;[13] als wirklich feste, aber auch eigene Misch-Besetzung bleibt letztlich nur der archaische Typus des Gesangs zur Laute eine stabile Option). Innovativ gegenüber einer (wie auch immer gearteten) Praxis des Kombinierens ist allerdings der Schritt in die Reflexion, wie sie sich in der so lakonischen wie ausbalancierten Formulierung »clarus vocum manuumque« sachte andeutet, in der die Stimme (oder eigentlich sogar: das Stimmband) und die Hände zwar als distinkte Werkzeuge aufgerufen werden, aber – über ein grammatisches

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[11] Vgl. dazu grundsätzlich Jürgen Heidrich, »Instrumentalisten als Autoritäten«, in: *Autorität und Autoritäten in musikalischer Theorie, Komposition und Ausführung*, hrsg. von Laurenz Lütteken und Nicole Schwindt, Kassel 2004 (Trossinger Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik, 3), S. 53–63.

[12] So z. B. die Zielgruppe der Regeln in Francesco Spinacino, *Intabulatura de lauto. Libro primo*, Venedig: Ottaviano Petrucci 1507, RISM 1507^5, Reprint hrsg. von François Lesure, Genf 1978, fol. 2.

[13] Christopher Page, »The Performance of Songs in Late Medieval France: a New Source«, in: *Early Music* 10 (1982), S. 441–450; David Fallows, »Specific Information on the Ensembles for Composed Polyphony, 1400–1474«, in: *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music*, hrsg. von Stanley Boorman, Cambridge 1983, S. 109–159.

Manöver – als verknüpftes, nicht getrenntes Instrumentarium erscheinen. Singen und Spielen können (auf höchstem Perfektionsniveau) in Personalunion auftreten, nicht unbedingt gleichzeitig wie beim Orpheus-artigen Lautensänger, aber als Disziplinen von ästhetischem Wert aufgrund derer beider man als Musiker Ruhm erwerben konnte.

Man mag mein Insistieren auf der symptomatischen Bedeutung dieser winzigen Textstelle als Überinterpretation bewerten. Doch auch auf diese Gefahr hin will ich an ihr festhalten, denn sie stellt – sofern sie sich als tragfähig erweist – den Schlüssel zur Konzeption des Bandes dar. Drei Sachverhalte sind in der Musikhistoriographie wohlbekannt:[14]

Erstens der quellenspezifische Sachverhalt: Seit den 1460er-Jahren mehrt sich, in verschiedenen Kontexten, die Überlieferung textloser Stücke; dieser Überlieferungsbefund erreicht mit Ottaviano Petruccis an der Jahrhundertwende einsetzenden Drucken seinen markanten Höhepunkt. Davon sind mehrere Kategorien betroffen: Werke, deren ursprünglicher Text von woanders her bekannt ist; Kompositionen, die mit ganz verschiedenen Texten kursierten; Sätze mit Textmarken bzw. Textincipits, die immerhin darauf hindeuten, dass sie einmal mit einem Text assoziiert wurden; Stücke mit Überschriften, die wenigstens einen begrifflich-inhaltlichen Horizont andeuten; Tonsätze mit Titeln, die nichts anderes zu bezwecken scheinen, als dass man sie über einen Namen oder eine formale Bezeichnungsweise identifizieren kann; Musik ohne alle sprachliche Zutat.

Zweitens der stilistische Sachverhalt: Seit den 1470er/80er-Jahren häufen sich in den musikalischen Notaten auffällig Passagen, die einen großen Ambitus einnehmen, schnelle Figurationen, insbesondere Skalenausschnitte, stereotype Rhythmen wie z. B. fortgesetzte Punktierung oder Triplierung, kurze formelhafte Figuren, die auch gerne von verschiedenen Stimmen pingpong-artig aufgegriffen werden, Ton- und vor allem Motivrepetitionen, nicht nur als Imitationsmotive, sondern auch in Form von bisweilen ausufernder Sequenzbildung, das alles nicht selten unter formalen Bedingungen wie immenser Länge der einzelnen Stücke, die oft auch noch nur geringfügig durch Kadenzen oder sonstige Techniken wie (Atem-)Pausen gegliedert erscheinen.

Drittens der organologische Sachverhalt: Im tonangebenden Instrumentarium ist im letzten Viertel des 15. Jahrhunderts ein doppelter Wandel erkennbar. Nicht nur, dass manche Instrumente zu ›Auslaufmodellen‹ werden (etwa die Fidel) und ihre Rolle an neue Instrumententypen abtreten (die mit einem Bogen gestrichenen Instrumente der Viola-da-gamba-Familie seit den letzten Jahren des 15. Jahrhunderts, zugleich Geigen sowie Posaunen). Diese neuen Favoriten, aber auch die überlebenden älteren (Flöten, teilweise Pommern) werden in abgestuften Größen verfügbar gemacht, in Familien gebaut und auch in Familien gespielt (wenngleich das noch nicht die ›Großfamilien‹ Praetorius'scher Dimension, sondern eher ›Klein-‹ oder ›Kernfamilien‹ sind). Einstimmig zu spielenden Instrumenten wird nun auch zunehmend die sonore Tiefe, die männlichen Sängern in der Regel zur Verfügung steht (und in der Musik seit Ockeghem weidlich ausgenutzt wird) erreichbar.

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[14] Neuere kurze Bestandsaufnahmen der älteren Forschungsliteratur bei Carl F. Jickeli, *Textlose Kompositionen um* 1500, Frankfurt a. M. 1994 (Europäische Hochschulschriften, 36.119), insbes. S. 4–13, und Armin Brinzing, *Studien zur instrumentalen Ensemblemusik im deutschsprachigen Raum des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 1998 (Abhandlungen zur Musikgeschichte, 4), Bd. 1: *Darstellung*, insbes. S. 18–35.

Aus einer durchaus teleologisch zu nennenden historiographischen Konstruktion werden diese Sachverhalte verkettet: als frühe Anzeichen für die Ausbildung einer eigenständigen, d. h. nach autonomen Gesetzen funktionierenden Instrumentalmusik. Und diese Grundannahme qualifiziert dann auch dazu zu beurteilen, ob eine bestimmte, eventuell nachträgliche Textierung gelungen ist oder nicht, ob – um es überspitzt auszudrücken – der bearbeitende Zeitgenosse den Gang der Geschichte durchschaut hat oder nicht. Die Folge dieses Interesses ist nachvollziehbar: Es geht – ausgesprochen oder unausgesprochen – darum, der Instrumentalmusik ein Repertoire zu sichern.[15] Und deshalb schwingt in dem methodischen Eingeständnis, wie es beispielsweise unlängst Lorenz Welker, Vorarbeiten anderer Autoren zusammenfassend, formulierte, eine gewisse Enttäuschung mit: »Eindeutige Stilkriterien, die vokal und instrumental voneinander scheiden, gibt es offenbar nicht. Und alle Versuche, Instrumentalmusik ausschließlich mit Hilfe von sicheren stilistischen Kriterien zu identifizieren, sind bisher fehlgeschlagen.«[16] Kriterien müssten von anderer Seite kommen. Voraussetzung dieser Herangehensweise ist die Annahme einer »ursprüngliche[n] Zweckbestimmung der Sätze«,[17] eines klaren Autorwillens auf Seiten der Komponisten hinsichtlich vokaler oder instrumentaler Aufführung, freilich ohne dass wir über externe Belege für diesen Willen verfügen würden und unsere Rekonstruktionen so immer hypothetisch bleiben.

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[15] Von diesem Interesse ist auch noch die jüngste, im November 2006 erschienene einschlägige Monographie von Jon Banks (*The Instrumental Consort Repertory of the Late Fifteenth Century*, Aldershot 2006) geprägt: Sehr wohl von stilistisch-idiomatischer Charakterisitik ausgehend in Verbindung mit quantitativer Quellenerhebung lenkt Banks den Blick auf eine ganz spezifische Formation, das (vorwiegend dreistimmige) Lautenconsort bzw., etwas weiter gefasst, das Ensemble aus Zupfinstrumenten, das dann auch verwandte Instrumente wie Gittern einschließt. Das organologische Umfeld von Harfe, Hackbrett und Saiteninstrumenten mit Tastenmechanismus wird von Banks nicht diskutiert.

[16] Lorenz Welker, »Instrumentalspiel, instrumentaler Stil und die Instrumentalsätze bei Petrucci«, in: *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* 25 (2001), S. 119f.

Wir befinden uns in einer methodisch prekären Situation: Um dem Teleologie-Vorwurf zu entgehen, scheint man von der Klassifikationsstrategie mit ihrer permanenten Frage »Ist das vokal?«, »Ist das instrumental?« abrücken zu müssen. Von dieser Scylla gelangt man aber zu Charybdis und in den unproduktiven Fatalismus einer postmodernen Haltung des »anything goes«. Die konzeptionelle Idee, die der Planung des Symposiums und der Publikation zugrunde lag, war daher eine andere:

Wenn wir davon ausgehen, dass Agricola selbst in seiner ausführenden und – unterstelltermaßen – komponierenden Identität zwischen den Stühlen »Vokalität« und »Instrumentalismus« saß oder, um das Bild etwas im Sinne des vorangestellten Zitats zu modifizieren, dass er auf beiden Stühlen saß; wenn wir uns ferner der etablierten Meinung anschließen, dass kompositorische Prozeduren und stilistische Merkmale, die wir tendenziell mehr dem Instrumentalen zuschlagen, und solche, die wir tendenziell eher als vokalidiomatisch einstufen, bei Agricola in besonderem Maße unabhängig von bestimmten Gattungen und im gesamten Œuvre anzutreffen sind, ja dass er diese Grauzone zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus – mehr oder weniger bewusst, aber bestimmt – in seiner Schreibweise ausnutzt; wenn wir schließlich zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass sein Werkbestand und vor allem dessen Überlieferung nur bedingt Anhaltspunkte dafür liefern, welche spezifische akustische Realität ihm selbst vorschwebte, ob er überhaupt ein bestimmtes Klangbild für konkrete Stücke favorisierte, dann können wir die Spurensuche nach idiomatischen Formulierungen, die aus vokalen oder instrumentalen Gegebenheiten und Bedürfnissen erwachsen, viel entspannter angehen. Dann lassen sich auch andere Fragen im positiven Sinn stellen:

Welche ästhetischen Werte suchte Agricola? Welches stilistische Ideal leitete ihn? Ist es nachvollziehbar, wie bestimmte Gesangsmanieren und Spielweisen die melodische, rhythmische oder sonstige Vorstellung des Komponisten inspirierten? Wie funktioniert die Mischung unterschiedlicher klanglicher Idiome in verschiedenen Gattungen? Welche Konsequenzen hat die stilistische Überblendung, wenn man die Musik in unterschiedlichen Besetzungen realisiert? Entstehen gerade daraus neue Qualitäten? Gibt es Beziehungen zwischen musikalischen Phänomenen und bestimmten Quellentypen und Überlieferungswegen? Wie wirkten sich regionale oder lokale Musiziergepflogenheiten auf musikalische Stile aus? Was ist als historische Praxis dokumentierbar und welche Aspekte müssen heute aktuell und als Hypothese entschieden werden? Kann man daraus womöglich objektive und nachvollziehbare Optionen und Empfehlungen für konkrete Ensemblezusammenstellungen ableiten? Wie flexibel hinsichtlich der Ausführung sind die Tonsätze?

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[17] Ebda., S. 113.

Diese Fragen sind nur im Verbund sinnvoll zu beantworten. So ist auch der Strauß der hier versammelten Beiträge eine multiperspektivische Sicht auf ein noch immer rätselhaftes, nicht selten polarisierendes Œeuvre. Auch die in diesem Band vertretenen Ansichten divergieren – aufgrund ihres Erkenntnisinteresses und ihrer Methoden.

Fabrice Fitch beschreibt den verzweigten, weitschweifigen, unsystematischen Stil Agricolas als generelles Konzept, das eine simple Applikation auf zeittypische stilbildende Figuren nicht zulässt.

Peter Woetmann Christoffersen erklärt zahlreiche dieser eigentümlichen musikalischen Physiognomien, vor allem die weitausholenden und verästelten, aus der – und damit Agricolas – Praxis des professionellen Stegreif-Singens.

Indes führt Warwick Edwards vor Augen, inwiefern die überlieferten Quellen selbst ohne Aussagekraft seien. Da die Stimme quasi ein Instrument verkörperte und die Worte nicht zur Essenz der Musik gehörten, sei deren Anwesenheit bzw. ihr Fehlen sekundär und dies in den Quellen folglich nicht indiziert. Eine Ausnahme stellen die cantus-figuratus-Sätze dar, die ein charakteristisches, aus der Improvisation erwachsenes instrumentales Repertoire ausbildeten.

Im Gegensatz dazu verfolgt Eugeen Schreurs die Spuren, wie sich in den Niederlanden instrumentale und vokale Sphäre hinsichtlich der musizierenden Ensembles als auch der musizierten Stücke zu trennen begannen.

Marc Lewon lotet (teils über die überlieferten Notentexte hinaus) die Möglichkeiten einer Realisierung auf der Laute oder mit zwei Lauten im Sinne der für die Zeit um 1500 zu rekonstruierenden Musikpraxis aus.

Von dem Faktum ausgehend, dass es grundsätzlich kein Problem darstelle, Vokales instrumental auszuführen, sucht Kees Boeke die Grenzen des vokal Darstellbaren in der Möglichkeit, Text zu applizieren. Bei der Verwendung von Instrumenten plädiert er für die Berücksichtigung der Spezifik der Instrumente vor der organologischen Umorientierung im frühen 16. Jahrhundert hinsichtlich Größe und Tonhöhe.

Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl schließlich macht die Nagelprobe auf den Effekt der diversen grundsätzlichen Besetzungsmöglichkeiten (vokal, instrumental, vokal-instrumental gemischt) anhand von drei CD-Einspielungen.

Stilistisches

Fabrice Fitch

Agricola and the Rhizome II – Contrapuntal Ramifications[*]

In a recently published article, I examine the *cantus firmus* mass output of Alexander Agricola, and consider some aesthetic issues arising from his deployment of borrowed materials.[1] Observing how Agricola's music has tended to be marginalized in most scholarly discussions of the period, I argue that modern-day evaluations of the general ›topology‹ of Western art music at the turn of the sixteenth century must take account of Agricola's pre-eminence in his own time. To that end, I propose as an aesthetic model the concept of the »Rhizome«, developed in the late twentieth century by the cultural philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari.[2] This, with its related concept of »arborescence«, proposes a framework within which different types of musical discourse may be related to each other – not in simple (binary) oppositional terms, but in a way that more accurately reflects the manner in which divergent aesthetic tendencies may co-exist within the same culture. Such a framework accommodates not only Josquin's or Jacob Obrecht's brands of ›rational‹ organicism (to use Edgar Sparks' terminology),[3] which has found particular favour among latter-day commentators, and which might be described as »arborescent«, but also the »rhizomatic« tendencies of Agricola's style, which as early as 1536 was described by Ulrich Brätel as »verkarth/ auff frembd manier«.[4] In this article I seek to extend the application of Deleuze's and Guattari's Rhizome beyond the formal problems posed by Agricola's use of borrowed material, focusing this time on more local issues, including the note-against-note details of contrapuntal technique. In keeping with the theme of this volume, I will draw for most of my musical examples on the textless pieces whose possible ›instrumental‹ destination has played such a crucial role in Agricola's reception-history.

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[*] This paper brings together materials presented at the 6th Trossinger Symposium zur Renaissancemusikforschung: *Alexander Agricola: Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus*, 28 April 2006; at the conference on *Musical Culture of the Czech Lands and Central Europe before 1620*, Prague, Clam-Gallas Palace, August 23, 2006; and at the Simposio Internacional *Alexander Agricola, † Valladolid 1506*, Valladolid, 27 October 2006. I thank Jaap van Benthem, Warwick Edwards, David Fallows, Lois Fitch and Martin Iddon for commenting on various drafts of this paper, and Nicole Schwindt for her invitation to contribute to the Trossingen symposium and for her painstaking reading of the final draft.

[1] Fabrice Fitch, »Agricola and the Rhizome: An Aesthetic of the Late Cantus Firmus Mass,« *Revue belge de musicologie* 59 (2005), pp. 65–92.

[2] This first appeared in Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Rhizome. Introduction* (Paris, 1976), which subsequently formed the first chapter of ibid., *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, vol. 2: *Mille plateaux* (Paris, 1980). The page numbers below refer to the pagination of *Mille Plateaux*. The English translation appeared as Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schrizophrenia*, transl. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1987 and London, 1988).

[3] Edgar H. Sparks, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet, 1420–1520* (Berkeley, 1963), pp. 119–20.

As I have argued previously, Brätel's testimony is of exceptional value.[5] Not only does his characterization depart from the conventional terminology of Renaissance writings on music; just as remarkably (and in this respect Brätel's comment may be unique for its period), there is nothing to suggest the negative value-judgement on Agricola that his choice of words – »crazy and strange«, no less! – seems to imply. His text begins, »So ich betracht, vn̄ acht der alten gsangk, mit danck wil ich jr kunst hoch preisen«; and although Agricola's name appears at the end of the list which includes Johannes Ockeghem, Josquin, Pierre de la Rue, and Heinrich Finck, there is no implication that he is less worthy of emulation than these others. (By contrast, Ambros's much later characterization of Agricola's style as »mürrischen, übellaunigen, finsteren Contrapunct«[6] is rather more unambiguously pejorative, and closer to the more sceptical stance taken by later commentators.) We might of course dismiss Brätel's evaluation as a one-off, were it not that the source-distribution of Agricola's music returns us to the fact of his considerable status in the eyes of his contemporaries. Is it unreasonable to suggest that the popularity of a composer whose music was regarded as deliberately challenging itself constitutes something of a challenge to our received opinions of Renaissance aesthetic attitudes to music?

In answering this question, one first needs to ask what it is about Agricola's music that might have been regarded as outlandish. Here one can only speculate, but it is easy enough to find turns and sallies that transgress

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[4] »So ich betracht, und acht«, *Fünf vnd sechzig teütscher Lieder/ vormals im̄ truck nie vß gangen*, Straßburg: Schöffer & Apiarius; RISM [1536]^{8}, no. 63, modern edition in *65 Deutsche Lieder für vier- bis fünfstimmigen gemischten Chor a cappella nach dem Liederbuch von Peter Schöffer und Mathias Apiarius (Biener) (Straßburg spätestens 1536). Erste Partiturausgabe*, ed. Hans Joachim Moser (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 207–11.

[5] Fitch, Agricola (cf. fn. 1), pp. 91–2.

[6] August Wilhelm Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 3: *Geschichte der Musik im Zeitalter der Renaissance bis zu Palestrina* (Leipzig, 1868), p. 243, 3rd edn., rev. Otto Kade (Leipzig, 1891, Reprint Hildesheim, 1968), p. 247.

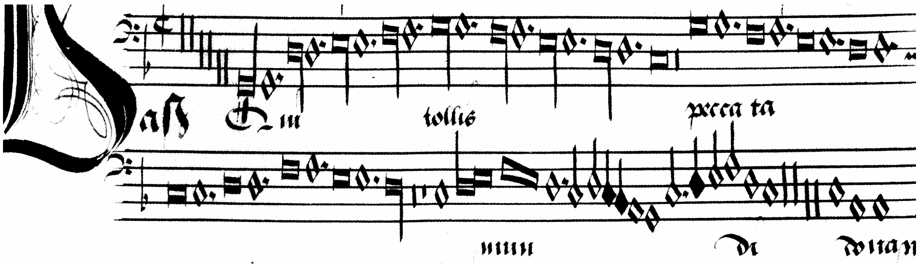

Figure 1: Alexander Agricola, *Missa In myne zyn*, Agnus Dei III, Bassus (B–Br, 9126, fol. 115^r)

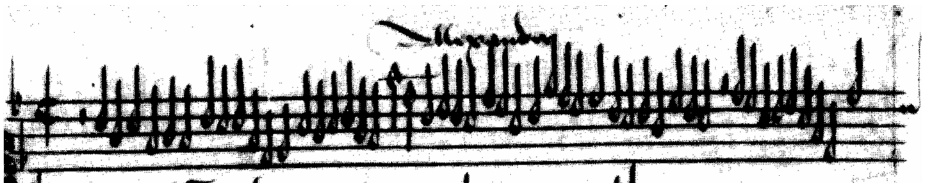

Figure 2: Alexander Agricola, *De tous biens plaine* II, Discantus (I–Fc, Basevi 2439, fol. 67^v)

contemporary norms of melodic construction, and that may well been held to exceed the bounds of the ›reasonable‹. As Obrecht's work plentifully demonstrates, Agricola has no monopoly on ostinatos and sequences that seem to overstay their welcome; but the impression of mischievous pleasure being taken in deliberate overstatement is arguably more generalized in Agricola's output, as a few brief examples demonstrate. Elsewhere, I have already discussed the first of these (Figure 1),[7] a visual pun that plays on the double meaning of the dot (either *divisionis* or, as here, *additionis*), with profound consequences for the surrounding polyphony.[8] The second is one of Agricola's most characteristic and oft-recorded pieces (Figure 2),[9] a *perpetuum mobile* in minims containing more disjunct intervals than conjunct; and the last two are not untypical in pushing a commonplace gesture or cliché to extremes (Figures 3 and 4).[10]

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[7] Facsimiles of this passage in *Choirbook for Philip the Fair and Juana of Castile, c. 1504–6. Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 9126,* introd. Fabrice Fitch (Peer, 2000), fol. 115^r; and *Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi C VIII 234*, introd. Herbert Kellman. *Renaissance Music in Facsimile* 22 (New York, 1987), fol. 172^r (orig. fol. clxiv).

[8] Fitch, Agricola (cf. fn. 1), pp. 73–4.

[9] Facsimile of this passage in *Basevi Codex. Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio, MS 2439*, introd. Honey Meconi (Peer, 1990), fol. 67^r.

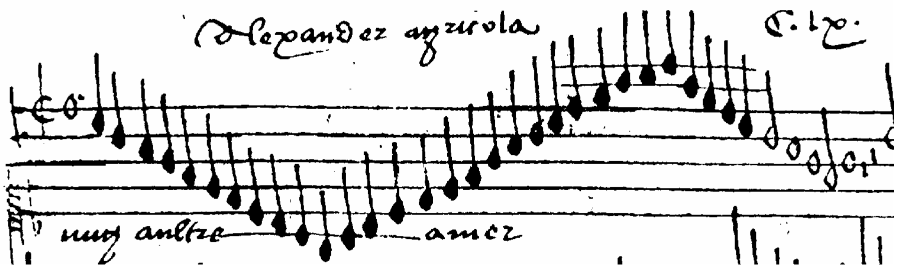

Figure 3: Alexander Agricola, *D'ung aultre amer* IV, Discantus (E–SE, s. s., fol. 160^{r})

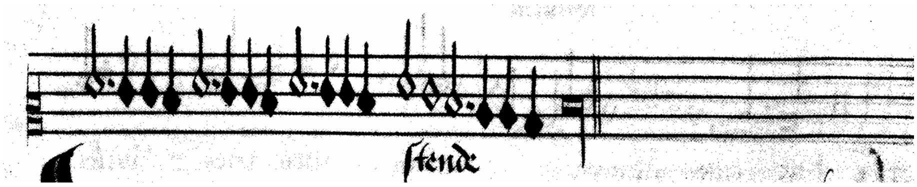

Figure 4: Alexander Agricola, »Salve regina« I, Discantus, bb. 136–40 (B–Br, 9126, fol. 141^{v})

There is something consciously ›overdrawn‹ about these examples, which are as effective in making their point as they are lacking in subtlety. I use the term ›gesture‹ advisedly here, because the physical element is experienced very directly in performance, most immediately by those engaged in enacting it. I suspect that these situations were intended, at least in part, as jokes.[11]

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[10] Facsimile of Figure 3 in *Cancionero de la Catedral de Segovia*, ed. Ramón Perales de la Cal, (Segovia, 1977) fol. clx^{r}; and of Figure 4 in Choirbook for Philip the Fair (cf. fn. 7), fol. 141^{r}.

[11] Humour has previously been invoked as an explanation of a piece's extraordinary stylistic profile in Clemens Goldberg, »Text and Music as ›Spiel‹: Humour in Ockeghem's Chanson ›L'aultre d'antan‹,« *International Journal of Musicology* 2 (1993), pp. 61–83; David Fallows, »The ›Only‹ Firmly Instrumental Piece: A Commentary on Benvenuto Dissertori,« *I codici musicali Trentini: Nuovi scoperte e nuovi orientamenti della ricerca. Atti del convegno internazionale »The Trent Codices: New Findings and New Directions«, Trento ... 1994*, ed. Peter Wright (Trento, 1996), pp. 81–92. On humour in Agricola's music, see also F. Fitch, »Two Fellows from Ghent: For the Obrecht and Agricola Quincentenaries,« *Proceedings of*

And as with the best jokes, particularly with physical humour, lack of subtlety is part of the effect. That the performers are the privileged recipients of Agricola's jokes is also suggested by the visual nature of the pun of Figure 1, which would have been especially obvious to the singers gathered round the choirbook. Such whimsical traits are present in sufficient variety to be symptomatic of a general tendency in Agricola's output; but in what follows I will argue that this tendency is more deeply rooted than the kind of surface details just examined. In claiming this I do not seek to downplay the importance of these details: the ludic element is as important to Agricola's aesthetic as it is to the art of Hieronymus Bosch, with whom Agricola has been associated on the covers of several CD anthologies.[12] But such boisterous games need not blind us, in Agricola any more than they do in Bosch, to the other registers on which one can play.

»Si dedero«: »multiplicities«

To return for a moment to Deleuze and Guattari, one must underline the importance they attach to the notion of »multiplicity« in their adumbration of the Rhizome. (»Les multiplicités sont rhizomatiques, et dénoncent les pseudo-multiplicités arborescentes.«)[13] For it is multiplicity, or rather »multiplicities«, that distinguish the rhizomatic from the root, the tree-structure in which succeeding levels replicate each other in a hierarchical manner: trunk, branches, twigs and leaves, with the network of roots that mirrors and replicates the structure in the opposite direction (described by Deleuze and Guattari as »arborescence«: see Plate 1, p. 24). The botanical rhizome's organization cannot be reduced to any single *modus operandi*. In contrast to the root's strongly vertical and centrifugal thrust (both up and down, above and below ground), the rhizome proliferates only on the horizontal plane, but does so in many directions, its shoots constantly doubling back on themselves

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the International Jacob Obrecht Quincentenary Conference, Antwerp 2005 (forthcoming 2007, on-line publication of the Alamire foundation, University of Leuven).

[12] *A. Agricola: Vocal and Instrumental Works*, Ferrara Ensemble, dir. Crawford Young, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi/BMG RD 77038 (Freiburg, 1990); *Alexander Agricola: Fortuna Desperata – Secular Music of the 15th Century*, Ensemble Unicorn, dir. Michael Posch, Naxos 8.553840 (Hong Kong, 1999); *Agricola: Missa Malheur me bat – Missa In minen sin*, A: N: S: Chorus, dir. János Bali, Hungaroton HCD 32011 (Budapest, 2001); and *Agricola: Missa Malheur me bat - Le serviteur – Missa Je ne demande*, A: N: S: Chorus, dir. János Bali, Hungaroton HCD 32267 (Budapest, 2004).

[13] Deleuze & Guattari, Mille plateaux (cf. fn. 2), p. 14 (»Multiplicities are rhizomatic, and denounce the pseudo-mutliplicities of the arborescent«; all translations are mine).

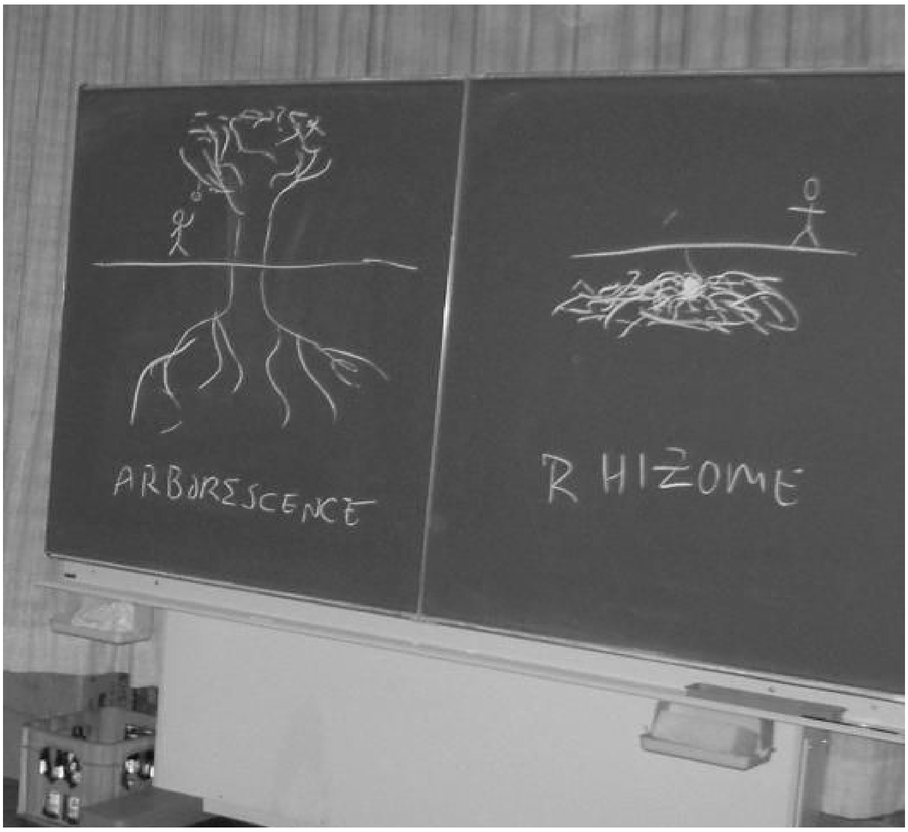

Plate 1: Rhizomes and arborescences: author's illustration at the Symposium, Musikhochschule Trossingen, 28 April 2006 (Photo: Warwick Edwards)

and meeting together fortuitously, forming local clusters. Considered as a system, the rhizome is anti-hierarchical and has no centre. Where arborescence replicates, the rhizomatic multiplies. The practical implications of such a system are perhaps best summed up in the statement that »[n]'importe quel point d'un rhizome peut être connecté avec n'importe quel autre, et doit l'être«.[14] What follows will shed additional light on some traits that may qualify as properly ›agricolesque‹; but through this consideration of compositional style I mean also to reflect on what a rhizomatic approach to counterpoint might entail in practice.

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[14] Ibid., p. 13 (»Any point in a rhizome can be connected with any other, and must be«).

I begin with Agricola's most popular work (Example 1),[15] which survives in more sources than any other secular piece of the fifteenth century. Its musical surface betrays none of the overtly outlandish humour we have observed so far. In fact, its profile is in many ways indistinguishable from that of many three-voice pieces of its time: witness the occasional use of paired imitation, the more extensive use of parallel tenths in the outer voices, and of sequence involving all the parts. Imitation is also used extensively, but its deployment is by no means straightforward.

Let us consider the piece's opening material. From the standpoint of dyadic (i. e., two-part) counterpoint, the imitation at the octave between tenor and discantus is perfectly standard; on the other hand, the contratenor's pitch at the point of the tenor entry (bar 6) is rather less so, given that a *c* a fifth below the tenor, instead of the current pitch, *A*, would be consonant with both upper voices, and would pose no problems in relation to the surrounding pitches. (In fact, removing the minim rest in the contratenor at bar 5 achieves exactly this result.) That the contratenor should be at odds with the principal voices is, perhaps, not so surprising; but if we consider the point of imitation with all three voices in mind rather than just two, the situation becomes more complex. The entries of the contratenor and the discantus are separated by the temporal distance of a long, and by the intervallic distance of a fourth. The expectation that the remaining voice will follow suit is not unreasonable, at least as far as temporal distance is concerned; and as it happens, the position of the discantus and contratenor at the downbeat of bar 5 is consistent with a tenor entry on *c* at that point. This is precisely what does not happen; when the tenor does enter, a breve later, it is markedly dissonant in relation to the contratenor, and sits uneasily within the fifth marked out by the contratenor and the discantus.[16] While the seventh between the contratenor and tenor is not directly struck,

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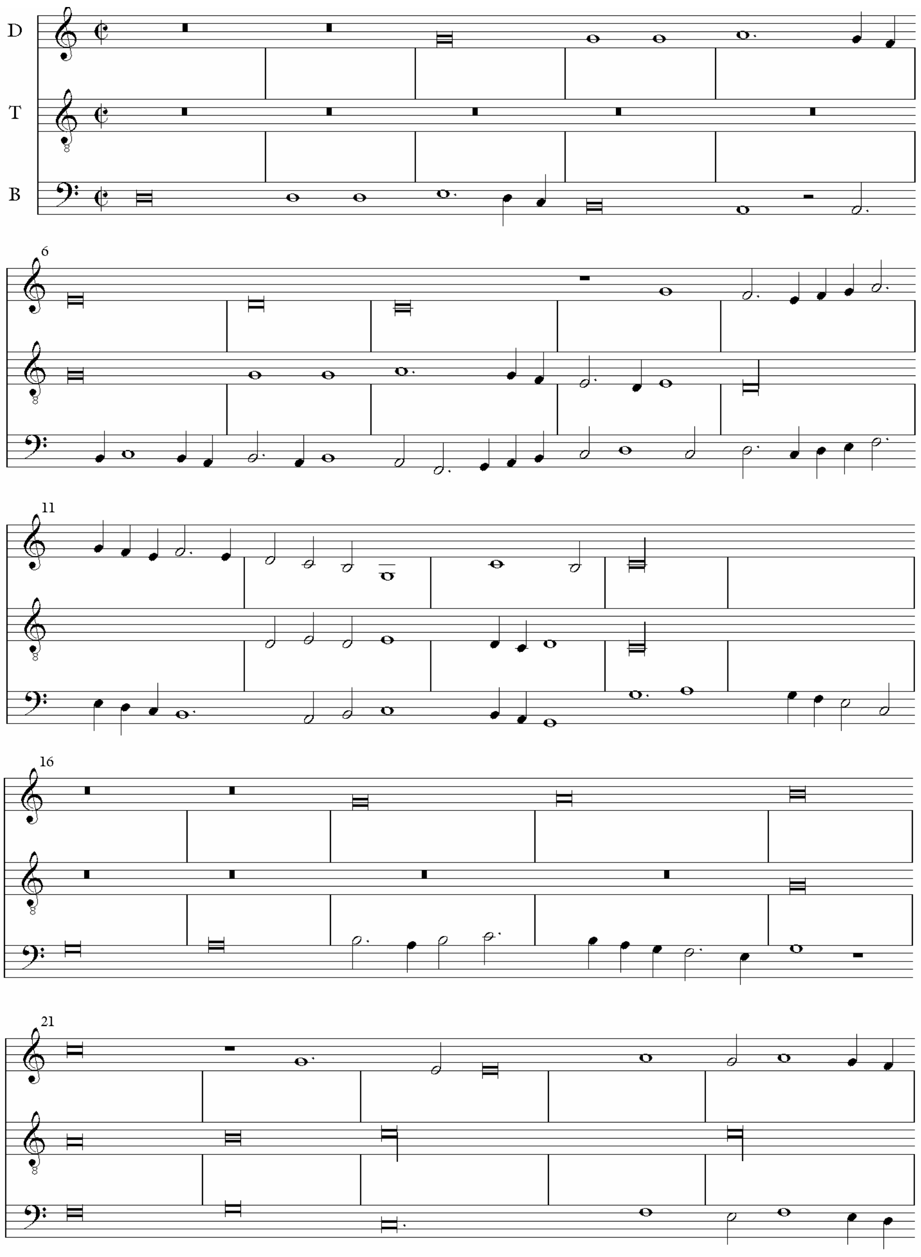
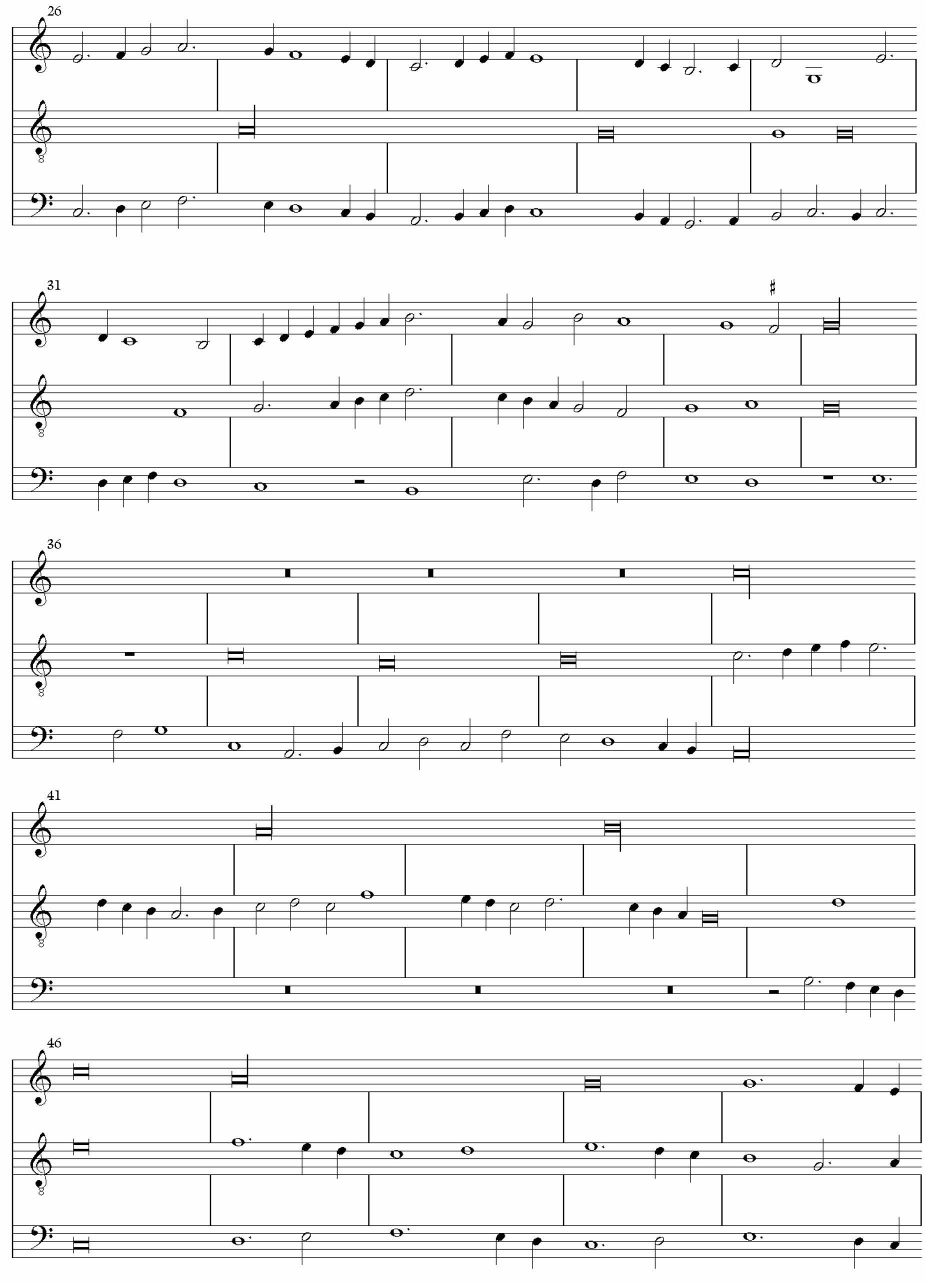
[15] All musical examples are in original note values, with whole bars always being equivalent to breves (perfect in tempus perfectum, and imperfect in tempus imperfectum). This convention is adopted for the whole movement concerned; hence, bar numbers in the musical examples differ from those in *Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia*, 5 vols., Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 22, ed. Edward R. Lerner (American Institute of Musicology, 1961–70), which appear in brackets alongside the captions for the musical examples. Where reference is made in footnotes to pieces not given as musical examples, the bar numbers cited are those of the *Opera omnia*. In all cases readings have been checked against the original sources.

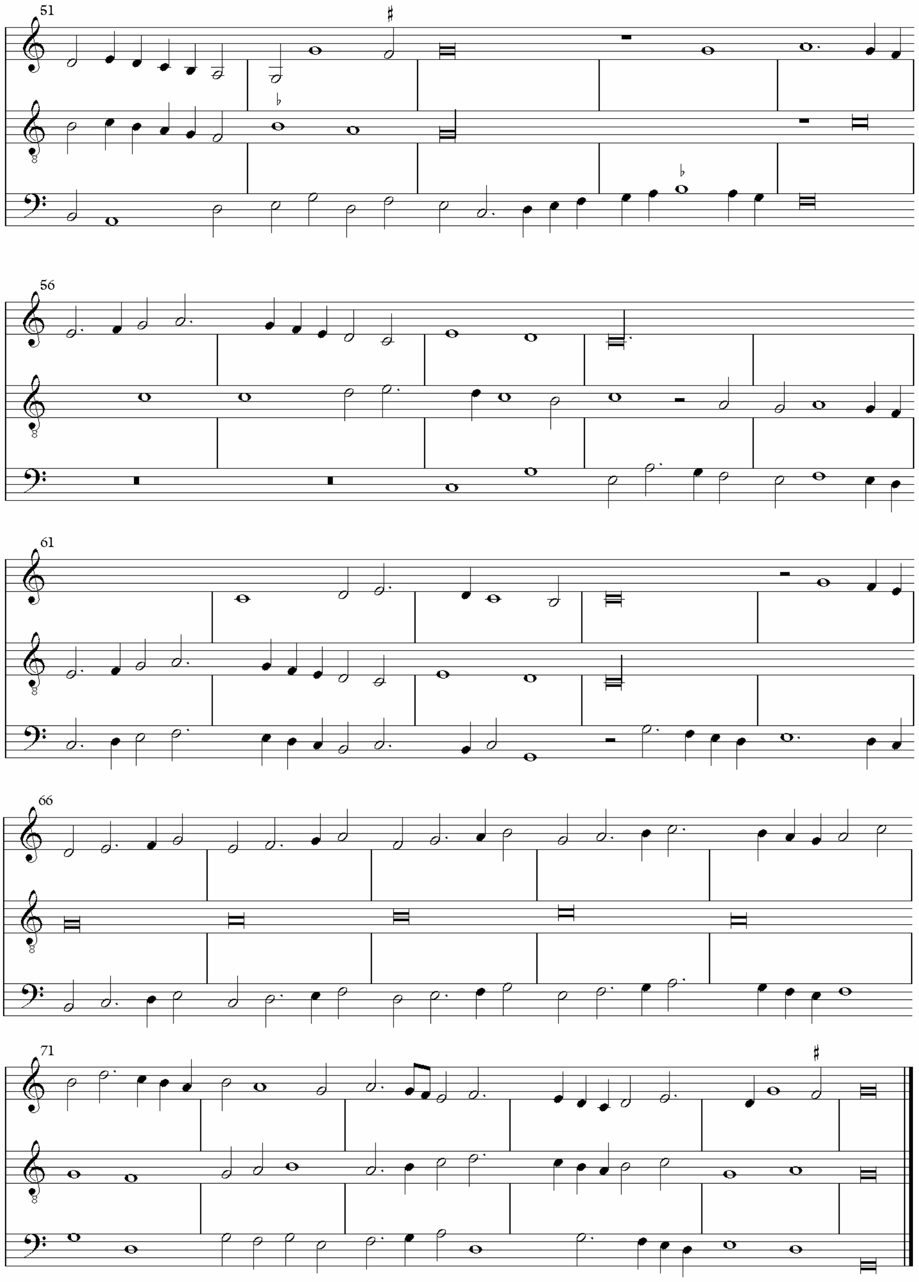
[16] One should note a variant in the Bassus part at this point, which resolves the problem, but it is contradicted by all the other sources (I–VEcap, 757, fol. 24^{v}–25^{r}).


D
T
B
6
11
16
21

Example 1: Alexander Agricola, »Si dedero« (complete, continued on next pages)


26
31
36
41
46

Example 1 (continued)


51
56
61
66
71

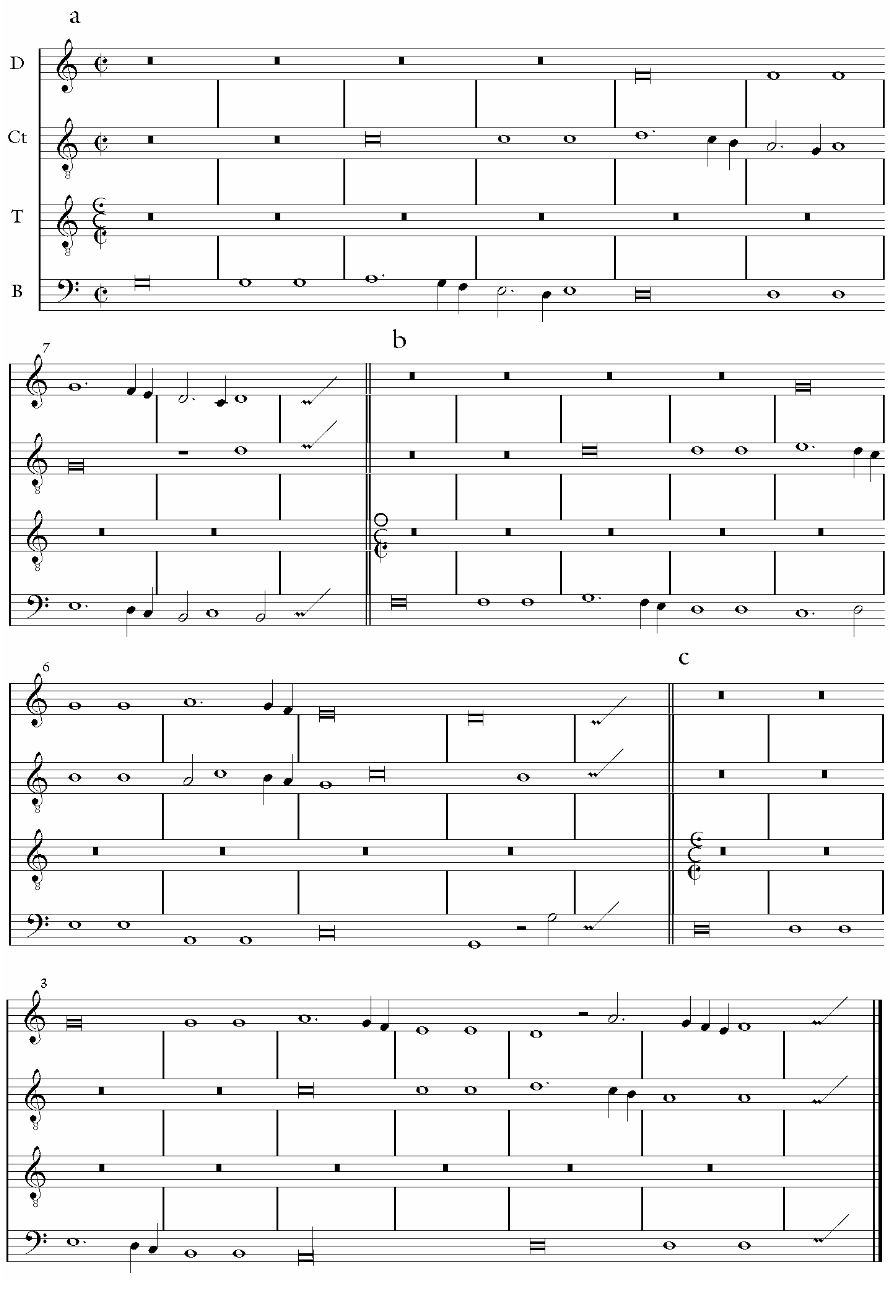
Example 1 (continued)

neither is it prepared in any way; nor is it resolved in any sense that would have been recognized in the fifteenth century. In this reading it is the tenor that is the odd one out.

At this point I must pause, because the idea of a ›normative‹ solution in terms of fifteenth-century imitative practice may strike the reader as an over-interpretation of the situation. In my support I can call no less a witness than Jacob Obrecht, who responded to »Si dedero« not only with a companion piece, *Si sumpsero*, but also with an entire Mass cycle. The first three of its movements begin by re-working the model's original point of imitation in different ways (Example 2a–c). Common to all three examples is the temporal distance between the three voices, which is always a long; the most significant difference is that the starting pitch (always in the bassus) changes in each movement. Most significant of these re-workings is that of the Credo, which reproduces exactly the normative realization of the material for which I have just argued, demonstrating that it can resolve cadentially while keeping the point of imitation in the discantus intact (bar 9). To propose this passage as a ›corrective‹ response to Agricola's solecism undoubtedly would be an over-interpretation; nevertheless, the consistency with which Obrecht elaborates the opening point across the three movements clearly underscores that which Agricola's realization eschews.

On the other hand, the three instances of Example 2 themselves exclude the discantus/tenor pairing that Agricola's version alone keeps in play. In this sense, Obrecht's glosses reveal what is most interesting about the opening of »Si dedero«: not so much that two sets of contrapuntal priorities are possible (discantus/tenor framework *vs.* the whole polyphonic fabric), but that they are neither mutually exclusive nor neatly reconcilable. It is neither a case of the famous *Gestalt* situation of duck-or-rabbit, in which one can perceive the one or the other, but not both simultaneously; nor is it one of straightforwardly dialectical synthesis, since the resulting dissonance, far from resolving the ambiguity, deliberately points it up. Rather, a contrapuntal image is created whose strength resides in the tension brought about by the confrontation of two alternatives. The situation at the beginning of »Si dedero« may be described as rhizomatic because, although the integrity of both readings is preserved, the confrontation of the two on the contrapuntal level is left unresolved.

What we have observed so far depends in part on the notion that the long constitutes a significant grouping in terms of »Si dedero«'s mensural organzation. This is confirmed by an ornamental figure in the tenor's state-


a
D
Ct
T
B
7
b
6
c
3

Example 2: Jacob Obrecht, *Missa Si dedero*
a) Kyrie (opening), bb. 1–8, b) Gloria (opening), bb. 1–9, c) Credo (opening), bb. 1–8

ment of the opening point, the dotted rhythm at bar 9.[17] This is not motivated by imitation, since it occurs in neither statement of the point in the other voices; rather, it echoes the same figure in the contratenor at exactly a long's distance (bar 7). In re-enforcing the importance of the long, this little figure connects two structurally unrelated parts of discourse, the one imitative, the other non-imitative. Such a connection, I suggest, fulfils Deleuze and Guattari's stricture, quoted above, that »any point in a rhizome can be connected with any other, and must be«.

The rest of »Si dedero« presents several other instances of tension arising from one voice, usually the tenor, being slightly ›off-centre‹ in relation to the others. This happens first with the next point of imitation at »somnum« (bb. 16–36), in which the tenor begins by conforming to the pattern set up by the discantus and contratenor (bb. 16–22). This again establishes the long as the principal temporal unit, but the tenor's next two pitch-changes (bb. 25 and 27) both fall outside the longa downbeats set up by the point of imitation. In fact, none of »Si dedero«'s points of imitation presents an unproblematic profile: there is constant play between breve and long, between imitative figures and the distance between statements expanding and contracting. At bar 40, the discantus imitates the tenor entry of the previous bar, at first doubling the lengths of pitches relative to the initial statement, then suddenly contracting on the breve *c'* at bar 46, which in the tenor had been prolonged melismatically. Similarly, the interval of two longs between the discantus's point at bar 55 and its imitation in the contratenor at bar 59 is telescoped onto a single breve when the tenor follows suit. The piece's closing ostinato sequence (bb. 66–9) also displays a rhythmically ambiguous profile, especially when the material in the outer voices is viewed in the original notation (Figure 5).[18] Examined without reference to the tenor, the accent could fall either on the dotted minim (a possibility reinforced by the return to the same pitch on the fourth minim of each group), or at the beginning of each ascent (with each group marked out by the preceding leap down a third).[19] It is only the tenor's pitches that resolve the ambiguity in favour of the latter reading.

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[17] One must again record another unique variant, this time in the Tenor voice, in which this ornament is left out (I–Bc, Q 16, fol. 120^v–121^r).

[18] Facsimiles of this passage in *Chansonnier of Marguerite of Austria: Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 11 239*, introd. Martin Picker (Peer, 1988), fol. 32^v, and *Ottaviano Petrucci. Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A. A Facsimile of the Venice, 1504 Edition*. Monuments of Music and Music Literature in Facsimile 1.10 (New York, 1973), fol. 61^v.

[19] See also the very similar four-voice sequence at the conclusion of the Gloria of Agricola's *Missa Je ne demande*, bb. 116–20, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 15), vol. 1:

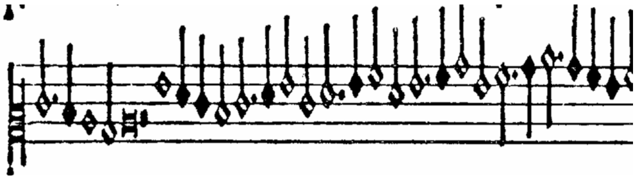

Figure 5: Alexander Agricola, »Si dedero«, Discantus (conclusion). *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1504, RISM 1504^2), fol. 61^v

In marked contrast with the more boisterous games encountered at the beginning of this paper, »Si dedero«'s play with metre and temporal articulation is subtle, almost understated. The largely conjunct voice-leading, the exchange of lengthy plainchant pitches between voices, result in a more placid texture than is typical with Agricola; but the longer one examines its contrapuntal relationships, the more tenuous the balance between the voices becomes. It is as though under close scrutiny the musical fabric might unravel altogether.

Rhythmic and linear independence: »ramifications in all directions«

One can hardly begin characterizing Agricola's style in even the most general terms without remarking on its distinctive rhythmic profile. First, there is its high note-density, a feature that appears slightly exaggerated in Edward Lerner's edition (due to its policy of quartering note-values in duple time and in mensurations with diminution, which the composer uses more often than not). Nevertheless, a glance at the music, whether in modern score or in original notation, testifies to its intricate surface, so much so that those pieces in his output in which rhythmic activity is stepped down (as happens in not a few songs, or in some of the shorter motets)[20] seem almost atypical, even though their number is hardly negligible. The impression of surface density is reinforced by the ›over-size‹ quality of Agricola's handling of

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Missa Le serviteur, Missa Je ne demande, Missa Malheur me bat, Missa In myne zyn (1961), p. 45, and the three-voice sequence at the conclusion of the Agnus II of the same Mass, ibid, p. 63, bb. 61–2. From a syntactical viewpoint their placement near the very end of the section, again mirroring the sequence in »Si dedero«, can hardly be coincidental.

[20] Among the songs, »En attendant la grace de ma dame«, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 15), vol. 5: *Cantiones, Musica Instrumentalis, Opera dubia* (1970), pp. 26–7, springs to mind on account of its popularity (it survives in 11 sources), but there are many others.

forms and genres. Masses like *In myne zyn* or *Malheur me bat*, songs like »Je n'ay dueil« or »Se mieulx ne vient d'amours«, are as remarkable for their exceptional length as for their density.[21] At first glance, one might think that a tendency to ›note-spinning‹ and formal expansiveness constitutes in itself fertile ground for the rhizome; but I would argue that contrapuntal density is not so much a cause as a symptom of rhizomatic behaviour, which may equally be discerned in Agricola's less prolix creations, as »Si dedero« demonstrates.

Nonetheless, those musical features that qualify as peculiarly agricolesque are rooted in specifically rhythmic phenomena. My initial examples from the original notation (Figures 1–5) owe much of their ›bizarrerie‹ to the fixation on a rhythmic unit: the minim (Figure 2) or semiminim (Figure 3), unnotatable (i. e., highly uncharacteristic) units of thirteen and seven minims (Figure 1), and ostinatos (Figures 4 and 5). As we will observe, ostinato is an especially significant feature of Agricola's style; suffice it for the moment to remark on its rhythmic basis. At the opposite extreme, one finds

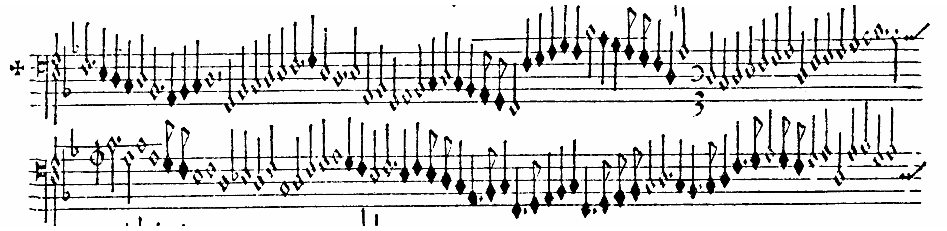

Figure 6: Alexander Agricola, *Tandernaken*, Contratenor. *Canti C numero cento cinquanta* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1503/4, RISM 1504^3), fol. 1045^r [recte 145^r]

passages exhibiting a degree of rhythmic variety (Figure 6)[22] and linear independence (Example 3) rarely encountered since the ars subtilior, and whose use in this period is otherwise confined for the most part to the occa-

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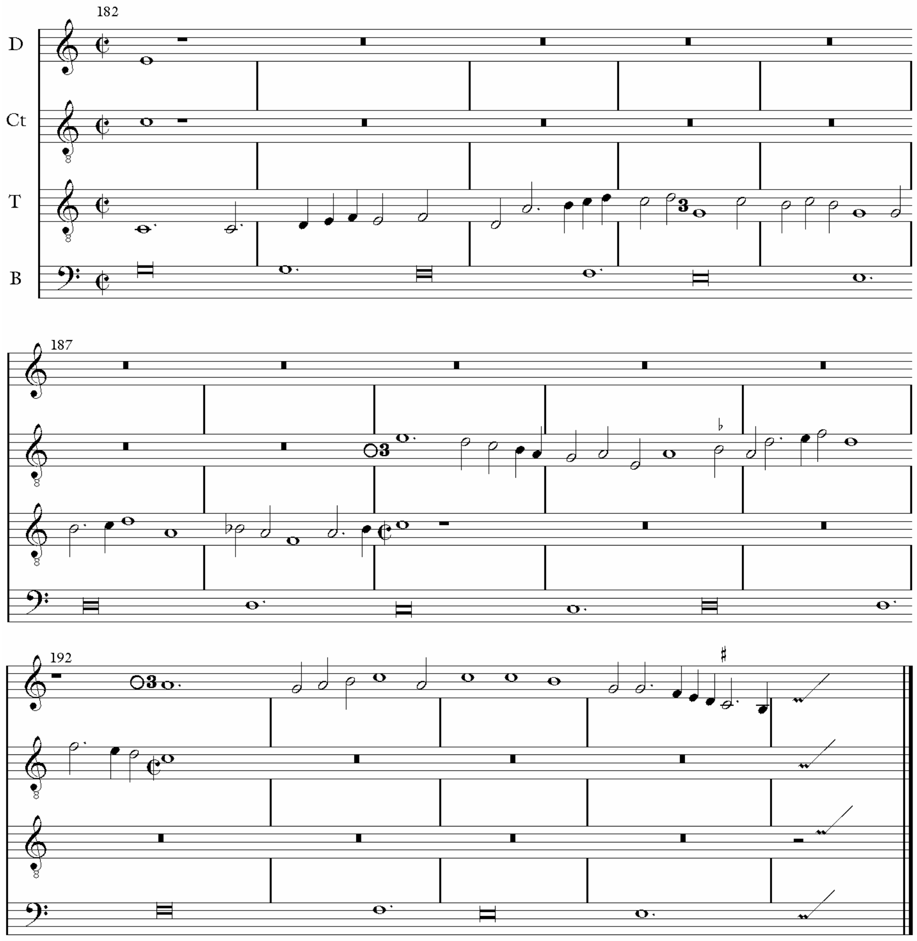
[21] Hence the remark of an anonymous scholar, reported by David Fallows, describing Agricola as »the Reger of his generation«: David Fallows, Review of *A. Agricola: Vocal and Instrumental Works*, Ferrara Ensemble, dir. Crawford Young, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi/BMG RD 77038, *Gramophone*, 68 (1990–1), p. 252.

[22] Facsimile of this passage in *Ottaviano Petrucci. Canti C Numero Cento Cinquanta: A Facsimile of the Venice, 1503/4 Edition*. Monuments of Music and Music Literature in Facsimile 1.25 (New York, 1978), fol. 1045^r [recte 145^r].



Example 3: Alexander Agricola, *Missa In myne zyn*, Agnus Dei, bb. 182–195 (109–115)

sional technical exercise or showpiece.[23] The original notation also underscores Agricola's deployment of the entire durational spectrum, including a greater frequency in the use of the longest and the shortest available values. Hence, longas and maximas occur more often than usual outside *cantus firmus* lines. The prevalence, at the other end, of semiminimas and fusas confirms both what has been observed about note-density and the special status of ornament within Agricola's style. The sense of rhythmic activity cultivated for its own sake explains, among other things, the straggling melismas one finds so often at sectional closes, most often in a single voice after the others have reached their final pitch.[24] Arguably, these flourishes serve no purpose other than to work off the rhythmic momentum accumulated in the foregoing section; this particular function distinguishes the rhizomatic dynamic from the arborescent. Indeed, to criticize such gestures (and Agricola's counterpoint in general) for its lack of direction[25] misses the point of the rhizome, which proliferates in *all* directions.[26]

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[23] E. g., Obrecht's two-voice »Regina celi«, *New Obrecht Edition*, vol. 16: *Motets* II, ed. Chris Maas (Utrecht, 1996), pp. 63–4. See also bb. 61–74 of the Gloria of Agricola's *Missa In myne zyn*, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 1 (cf. fn. 19), pp. 108–9.

The maintenance of rhythmic momentum is a contributing factor in Agricola's frequently unorthodox handling of contrapuntal details, for example the prominence of consecutive fifths, octaves, and even unisons. (I use the term »prominence« here not so much quantitatively as qualitatively.) The fifths in both directions between the outer voices in Example 4a (bar 9) are due to the non-essential dotted rhythm in the discantus, whose primary motivation is the avoidance of stasis (both within the line, and simultaneously with the held *b* in the tenor). In Example 4b one finds the same dotted figure deployed in the bassus (bar 56) for the same reason, that of sustaining rhythmic impetus: here again, the consecutives occur between outer voices. The momentum generated by individual lines also induces consecutives when the material is predominantly scalar, as in Example 4c. Here, one notes the same prevalence of dotted rhythms, and the fact that the consecutives at bar 175 (fifths between discantus and tenor, immediately followed by unisons between contratenor and discantus) occur not in simple pairs but in strings of three in the same direction. The prioritiation of individual lines over contrapuntal propriety recalls the rhizome's propensity for proliferation in all direction, by which individual shoots may meet fortuitously and tie themselves into knots. The consecutives of Example 4c are momentary knottings together of diverging contrapuntal strands – especially

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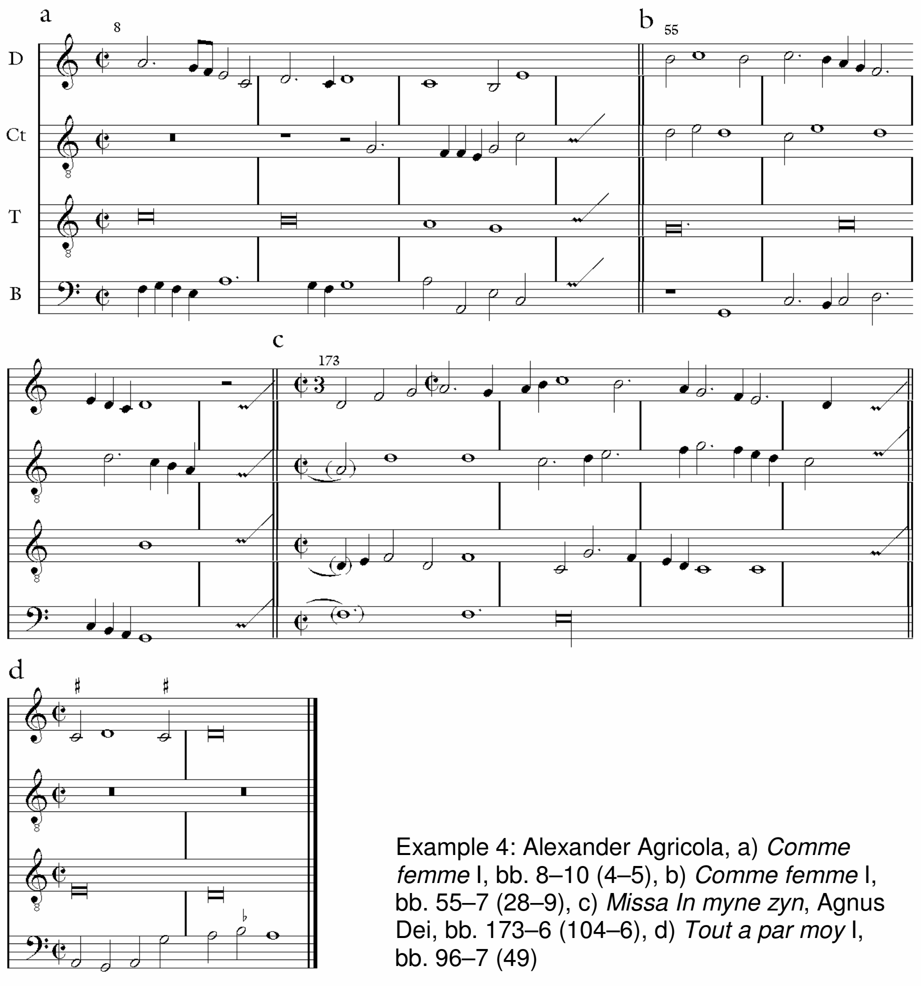
[24] Fitch, Agricola (cf. fn. 1), p. 90, fn. 76.

[25] John Milsom, »Beyond Josquin«, Review of CD by A: N: S: Chorus, dir. János Bali, *Alexander Agricola: Missa Malheur me bat, Missa In minen sin*, Hungaroton HCD 32011 (2001), *Early Music* 32 (2004), pp. 159–65, esp. p. 164, where the counterpoint in these Masses is described as »aimless«.

[26] Deleuze & Guattari, Mille plateaux (cf. fn. 2), p. 13: »Le rhizome ... a des formes très diversifiées, depuis son extension superficielle ramifiée en tous sens jusqu'à ses concrétions en bulbes et tubercules ...« (»The rhizome takes very diverse forms, ranging from its superficial ramified extensions in all directions to its concretions into bulbs and tubers ...«).



Example 4: Alexander Agricola, a) *Comme femme* I, bb. 8–10 (4–5), b) *Comme femme* I, bb. 55–7 (28–9), c) *Missa In myne zyn*, Agnus Dei, bb. 173–6 (104–6), d) *Tout a par moy* I, bb. 96–7 (49)

if one considers the stretto-laden context in which they occur. The necessity of maintaining rhythmic momentum equally informs the twists and turns of the lines themselves, as in Example 4d, where the leap of a seventh inflects the bassus' octave leap cadence, allowing the line to extend beyond the octave to its flattened upper neighbour.[27] The density of individual lines is often a contributory factor in those unpredictable contrapuntal twists and turns that seem so peculiarly agricolesque. Example 4a (bar 10, immediately following the consecutives just mentioned) illustrates this point also: the bassus' string of rapid leaps in opposite directions is necessitated by the introduction in the contratenor of that quintessentially ornamental figure, the cadential double leading-note.

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[27] See also *Amours, amours*, bb. 9–10, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 20), p. 71.

Cadential function: »any point of a rhizome ...«

But this ornamental figure (on the pitch *g*) is not the only cadence to occur in Example 4a: on the preceding beat, the bassus cadences with the tenor on *a*; the contratenor's figure is initiated before the previous cadence is even completed. Thus, cadential material is presented in all four voices within the space of a long, for the discantus also presents the *tenorizans* component of a cadence on *c'* (resulting, as we have seen, in consecutives with the bassus); but significantly, it is not complemented by another voice.

This tightly knit passage introduces several facets of Agricola's peculiar play with cadential function. (Not »cadence«, but »cadential function«: the distinction is important.) In Tinctoris' well-known phrase, the tenor is said to be the »fundamentum totium relationis«,[28] not so much because it carries the *cantus prius factus*, but because it is the voice on which cadences are built. Accordingly, cadential treatment is regarded as a primary indicator in stylistic evaluations of medieval and Renaissance music. Thus, to take an example close to home, Ockeghem has been held up both for his habit of stepping up contrapuntal activity in the lead up to major cadence and for the avoidance of cadence as a syntactical device.[29] This is not as much a paradox as it might appear: rather, that the undermining of cadence on the local level is counterbalanced by its re-enforcement at major points of structural articulation (the famous »drive to the cadence«).

By contrast, Agricola frequently saturates the music with cadences and cadential material. Example 5, in which a cadence between one pair of voices immediately overlaps with another on a different pitch (similarly to Example 4a), is only an extreme instance of a generalized phenomenon, for Agricola's melodic lines are frequently a concatenation of cadences, as the preceding

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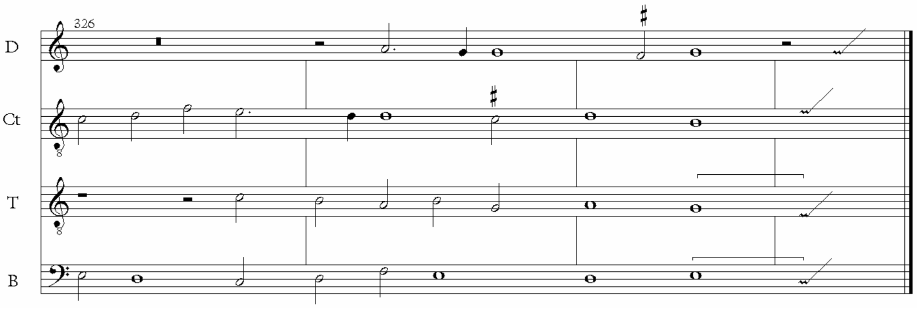
[28] *Johannis Tinctoris Opera theoretica*. Corpus Scriptorum de Musica 22, ed. Albert Seay (American Institute of Musicology, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 85–6.

[29] This view is first fully articulated in Manfred Bukofzer, »Caput: A Liturgico-Musical Study,« ibid., *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York, 1950), pp. 217–310, esp. 281–5 (on the avoidance of cadences) and 285–6 (for the »drive to the cadence«).



Example 5: Alexander Agricola, *Missa In myne zyn*, Credo, bb. 326–8 (164–5)

Figure 4 illustrates *ad absurdum*.[30] And here there really is a paradox: Agricola's cadential saturation and Ockeghem's avoidance of cadence are the flipsides of the same coin, for the frequency of cadences in Agricola undermines their perception as syntactical units, and hence their functional effectiveness. This differs also from the practice of several of Agricola's contemporaries, for example Heinrich Isaac or the mature Obrecht, in whom frequent cadences typically serve as audible formal markers, either by articulating the underlying mensuration, or by helping to establish the mode.[31]

A typical example of cadential saturation is Example 6, the concluding passage of *Amours, amours*, a tenor setting of one of Hayne van Ghizeghem's most popular chansons. These 18 breves contain no fewer than eleven cadences. Earlier I referred to »cadential material« rather than »cadences«, and this passage helps clarify the distinction. It is by no means clear whether every single instance of cadential behaviour requires alteration by *musica*

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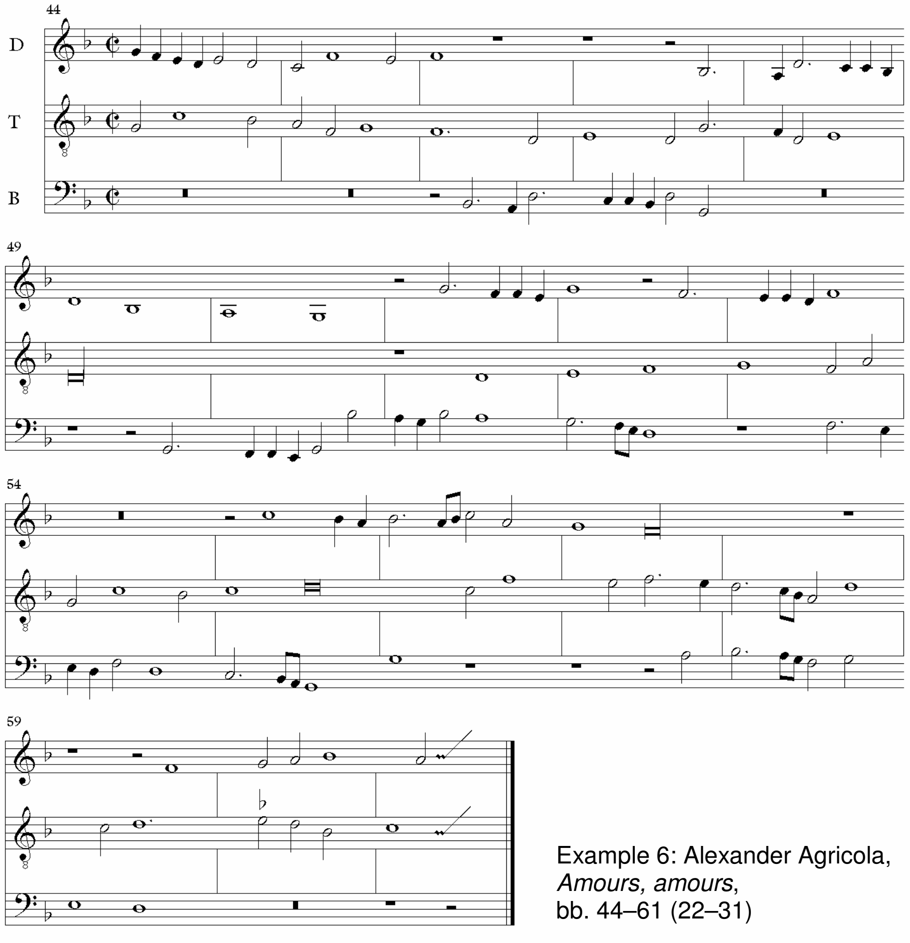
[30] See for example *D'ung aultre amer* I, Discantus, bb. 7–14, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 20), p. 86. For more extended plays with cadence, see the discantus of *Tout a par moy* I at bb. 15–20 (reproduced here in Example 12), in which a series of characteristic figures skirt round the same pitch (*g*) before a more emphatic melodic gesture rounds off the passage (bb. 19–20). Such delayed cadential resolutions are quite common: see *Missa In myne zyn*, Credo, bb. 183–6, Discantus, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 1 (cf. fn. 19), p. 126, or *Comme femme* I, bb. 19–23, Discantus, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 20), p. 73.

[31] On the role of cadence in Obrecht's mature style, see Rob C. Wegman, *Born for the Muses: the Life and Masses of Jacob Obrecht* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 224–5. Isaac's tenor re-workings exhibit a similar tendency (along with most of his work) to a similarly clear-cut use of cadence. Examples would be invidious in view of their sheer number; suffice it to remark that the sort of subversions of cadential behaviour observed here are a peculiar feature of Agricola's style.

ficta; indeed, there are so many in this passage that it would seem overly fastidious to sharpen every leading-note.[32] The dilemma would pose itself most acutely to a performer using the original notation, and to whom this piling-up of cadence upon cadence would eventually become properly ›ludicrous‹. Besides, in the opening bars of this passage, it is not so much the cadences themselves as the ostinato treatment of the cadential discantus-figure (dotted minim and three semiminims) that is the main focus



Example 6: Alexander Agricola, *Amours, amours*, bb. 44–61 (22–31)

of interest – a point confirmed by the contratenor at bars 53–4, where it occurs on the ›wrong‹ part of the beat. An ›ornamental‹ figure is raised to the status of imitative point. This is a fairly widespread occurrence in Agricola's music, whose implications go to the heart of his contrapuntal practice and aesthetic. We will return to it presently.

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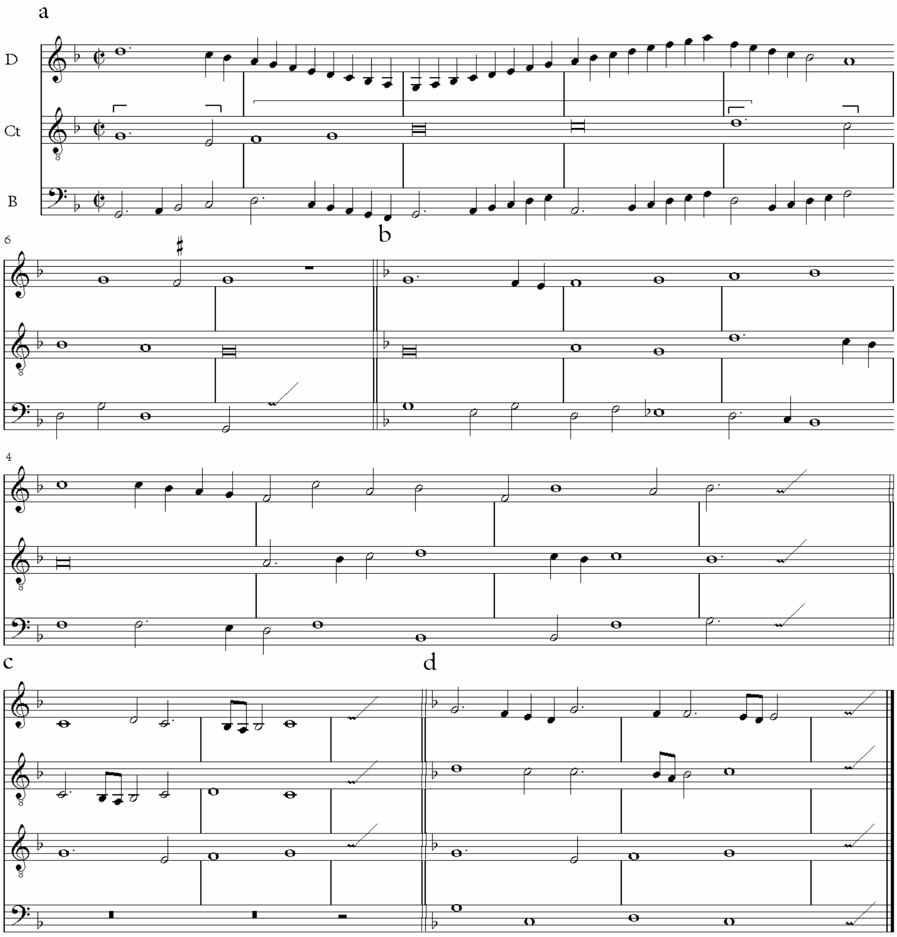
[32] For this reason I have deliberately refrained from supplying editorial accidentals in Example 6.

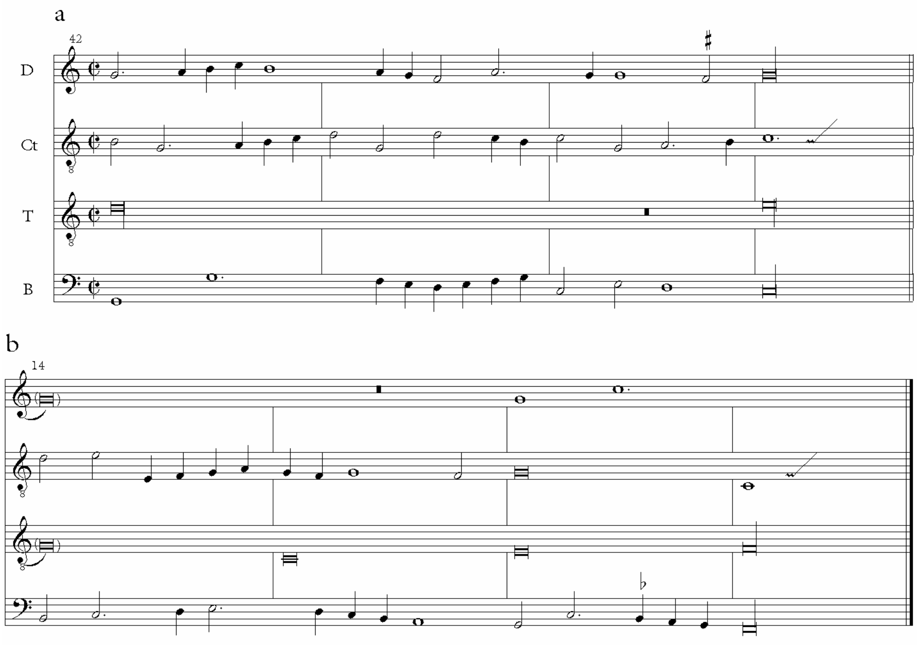
Earlier, I proposed the weakening of cadential function as one of the main consequences of cadential saturation. A favourite ploy of Agricola's con-



Example 7: Alexander Agricola, a) *D'ung aultre amer* IV, bb. 1–7 (1–4), b) *D'ung aultre amer* III, bb. 1–7 (1–4), c) *D'ung aultre amer* II, bb. 1–2 (1), d) *D'ung aultre amer* I, bb. 1–3 (1–2)

sists in opening a piece with a cadential gesture, placing it so early on in the work that its usual role, that of delimiting the piece's mode, is negated. The opening gestures given as Example 7 belong to four settings of the same *cantus firmus*, Ockeghem's »D'ung aultre amer«. The first (Example 7a, which we have already encountered in original notation as Figure 3), despite the eccentricity noted earlier, at least presents a straightforward example of an opening cadence, with both tenor and discantus in their proper place (bar 7); in addition, the cadence marks the ending of a musical phrase, as shown by the pause immediately following it in the discantus. In Example 7b, a syntactically correct cadence between tenor and discantus is undercut by the contratenor (bar 6). Note that this opening cadence is not on the piece's final, and does not mark the end of a phrase. This less straightforward cadential type is nevertheless quite common, but the opening cadence of Example 7c (bar 2) is at several degrees' remove from cadential norms. It occurs almost immediately, too soon in fact to establish itself conclusively; but in any case it is not on the final, and does not involve the tenor, whose material assumes the position normally taken by the contratenor. In a further twist, the actual contratenor's opening material, an ostinato that repeats over the course of the next few bars and is taken up in all the free voices, is also embedded within the discantus's opening material. The ornamental turn just observed also occurs at the beginning of Example 7d. This time the tenor again assumes the contratenor function in the cadence on *c* between contratenor and bassus (bar 2); but in a near repeat of Example 5, the moment of the cadence coincides with the preparation of another cadence on the next beat between the discantus and tenor.

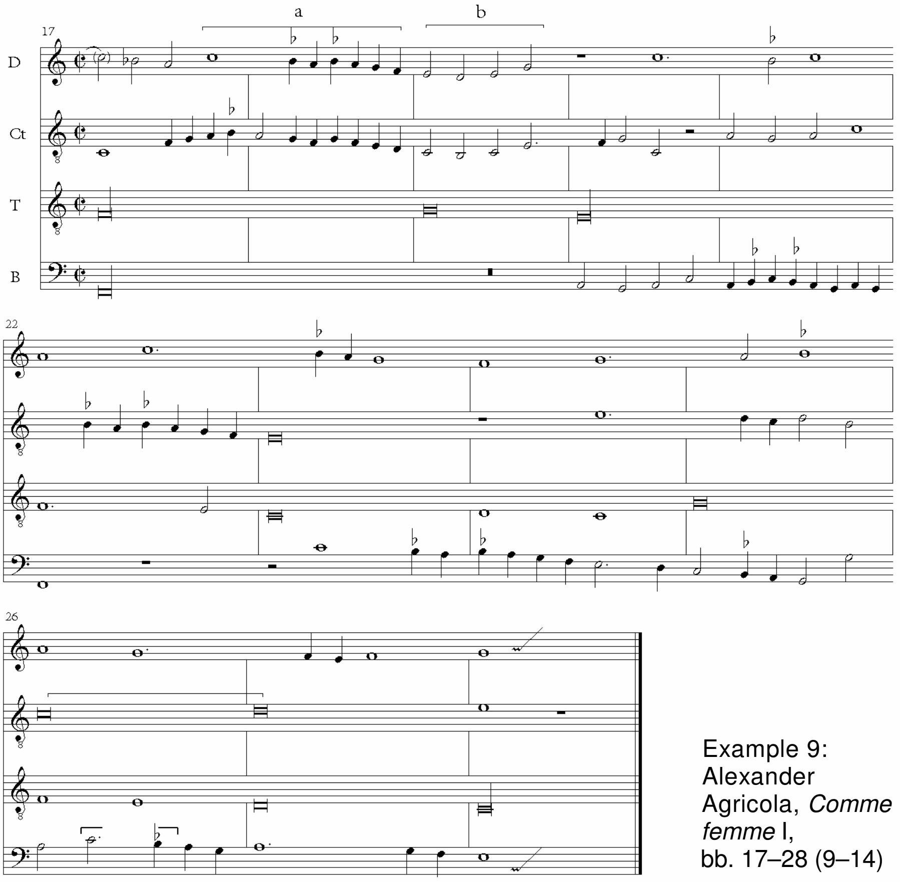
The discantus's material is straightforwardly cadential, but the tenor's *cantus prius factus* entails that this cadence is in fact a blind. This kind of ›blind cadence‹ (by analogy with a ›blind window‹, which opens out onto no view at all) in which the discantus components of a cadence are presented in the absence of a corresponding tenor motion, is one of Agricola's favourite devices. Example 8a shows another ›blind cadence‹ in which the distinction between cadential function and cadential material is pointed up more sharply still. At bar 45 the contratenor and bassus articulate an embryonic cadence on *c* – embryonic (or *simplex*), because weakened by the absence of a suspension. That suspension is supplied by the ›blind cadence‹ in the discantus, which lacks the corresponding descent down to *g* in another voice, and which results in consecutive fifths with the contratenor. The tenor, which is silent at the point of cadential preparation, enters on the third, functionally the least essential part of the sonority. This example combines all the features remarked on so far – the dissociation of cadential material and cadential function, the pointed alienation of the tenor, and the prioritization of linear considerations over contrapuntal propriety. Finally, in Example 8b (drawn from the same piece) a cadence is set up at bars 15–6 in which the tenor not only assumes the role of the contratenor placed between the cadencing voices, but fails to resolve even this in the normal manner, ascending not by step, but by a third. It is not just that cadences are achieved independently of the tenor, but that they are very often placed as it were in spite of it: its role as the »fundamentum totium relationis« is deliberately undermined.



Example 8: Alexander Agricola
a) *Comme femme* I, bb. 42–5 (22–3), b) *Comme femme* I, bb. 14–7 (7–9)

Ornament and ostinato: »concretions into bulbs and tubers«

The elevation of ornamental and scalar passages to the syntactical status of imitative points underlines the fundamental role of ornament within Agricola's style. Even as minute an alteration as the one noted in the opening point of »Si dedero« plays its part in establishing the network of embedded connections, ostinatos, and aperiodic exchanges between voices, which I propose is crucial to the notion of a rhizomatic counterpoint. Example 9 gives another typical instantiation of Agricola's imitative practice.



Example 9: Alexander Agricola, *Comme femme* I, bb. 17–28 (9–14)

A characteristic ornamental turn (labelled »a«) is articulated in all free voices in turn. In its first statement by the discantus (exactly shadowed by the contratenor at the tenth below), it is followed by a minim pattern (labelled »b«); but in the next statement by the contratenor on its own (bars 21–2), the two figures are reversed. In the meantime, the bassus entry opens with »b« in immediate imitation of the discantus-contratenor pair (bar 20), and follows this with a semiquaver turn whose rhythmic and melodic profile clearly recalls »a« (bar 21). After a brief pause the bassus introduces »a« in its exact form (bar 23), this time jettisoning »b«. Following a further descending figure at bars 24–5 outlining the same interval as »a« (a sixth *e*–*G*), the bassus appears to initiate a final presentation of »a« at bar 26 (signalled by the off-the-beat, dotted quaver *c*'), which is interrupted, or as it were rhythmically diluted, since the general outline is the same and the pitch of arrival, *e*, is eventually reached. At several other points along the way, the appearance of the pitch *c* in the other voices likewise appears to signal another statement of »a« (discantus, bars 20 and 22, and contratenor, bar 24, on the pitch *e'*). Most of these ›near-misses‹ in fact take the form of an on-the-beat dotted crotchet; but the reference to figure »a« in each case clearly implied, since none of its actual appearances occurs in quite the same context.

In its broad outlines, this approach to imitation is reminiscent of Ockeghem;[33] but the use of ornamental figures as imitative points is particularly agricolesque, and is perhaps best understood in terms of the composer's preoccupation with rhythm: it allows imitation to take place without having to reduce note-density. The working-out of such points also recalls (as with Example 6) the rhizome's (dis)organization »from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers«.[34] This describes the manner in which several weaker or ›diluted‹ statements of the point (including the ›near misses‹) follow on from the more exact ones, or may on the contrary precede them. The ›concretion‹ or occasional thickening of material (»bulbs and tubers«) describes the concentration of imitation in passages like this one, a stretto-like clustering whereby statements (here of »a« and »b«) follow each other in close succession, but irregularly. Two features are worth exploring further: first, the appearance of these ›knots‹ of imitative fabric within musical discourse is itself irregular and momentary (we will return to this aspect presently); second, the saturation of the contrapuntal texture by individual rhythmic figures is so pronounced as to blur the distinction between imitation and ostinato.

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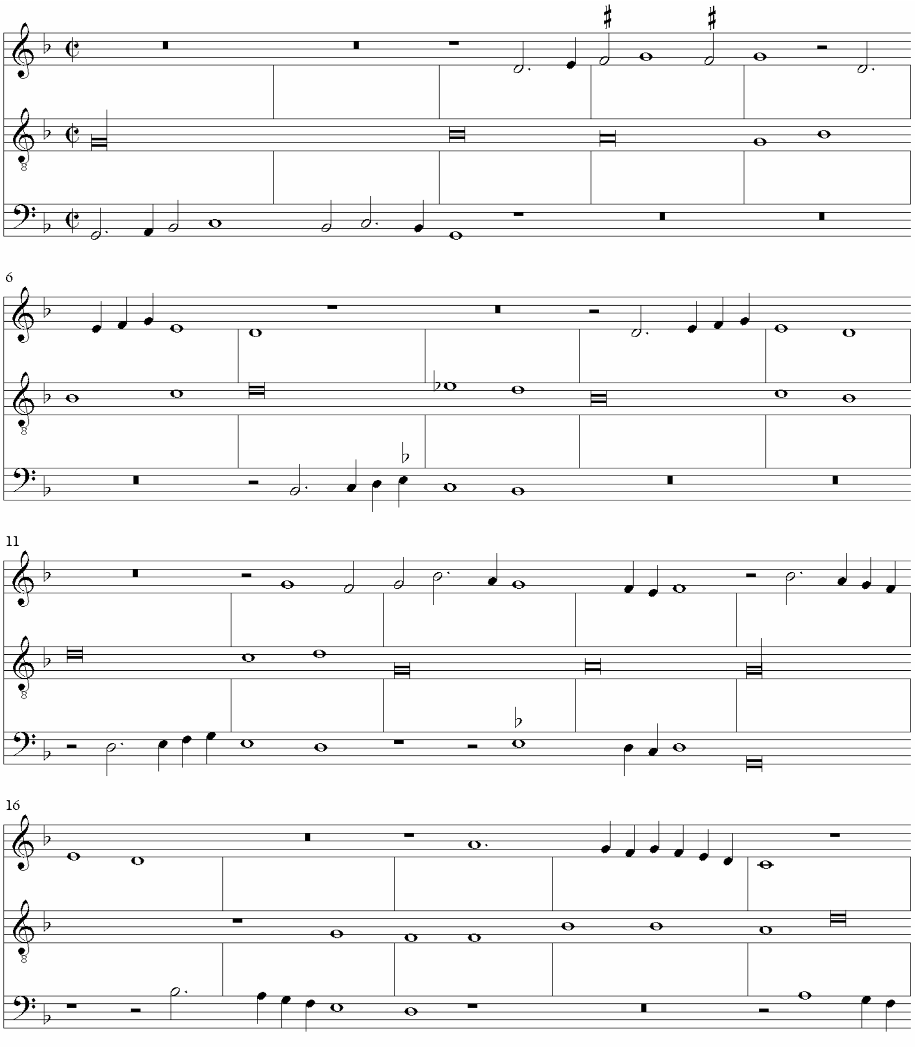
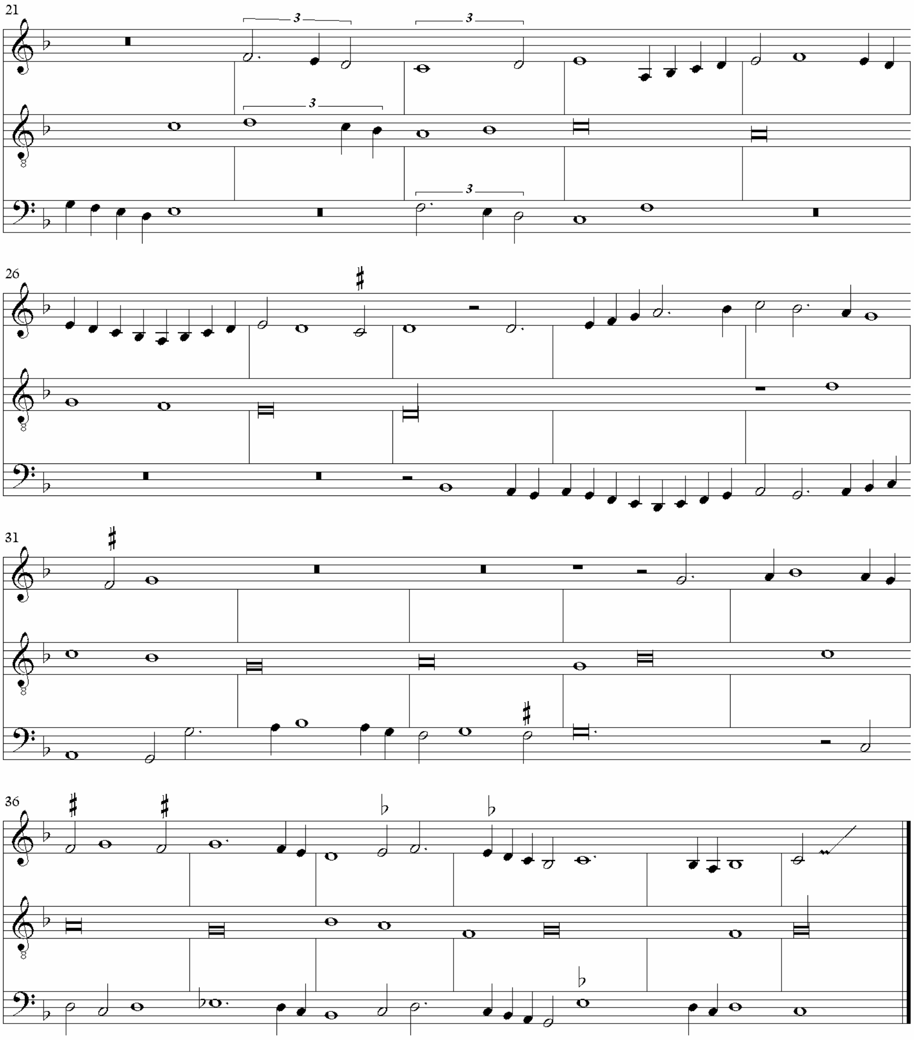
[33] The uncoupling of a point of imitation so that two components are presented now in one order, and now in another, is sometimes seen in the elder composer's works. See Fabrice Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Models*. Collection Ricercar 2 (Paris, 1997), p. 185. For a discussion of Ockeghem's imitative practice in the *Mi-mi* Mass, see Irving Godt, »An Ockeghem Observation: Hidden Canon in the ›Missa Mi-Mi‹,« *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke vereniging voor Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis* 41 (1991), pp. 79–85, and Fitch, Johannes Ockeghem, ibid., pp. 171–6.

[34] See fn. 26 above.



Example 10: Alexander Agricola, *De tous biens plaine* I (three-voice version), bb. 1–41 (1–21) (continued on next page)

Particularly interesting in this regard is the *De tous biens plaine* setting that survives as a four-voice piece in Petrucci's *Canti C*. In two other sources the contratenor is omitted, and although that voice is quite plausibly by Agricola, the remaining pair of free voices offers such a compelling contrapuntal profile that it is worth considering the work, for present purposes at



Example 10 (continued)

least, as a three-voice composition, in line with Agricola's other surviving re-workings of the same tenor. More than half of the piece consists of a dialogue between the two voices (Example 10), such that they rarely coincide in the first 40 bars. Strikingly, their material draws almost entirely on the contrapuntal small change of the period: the bassus's opening gesture is typical of an optional contratenor to Hayne's original discantus/tenor pair. Nevertheless, each subsequent point introduced by the discantus builds in some way on what precedes. The rhythm at bar 15 is identical to that at bars 9–10, and its descending sixth is replicated and slightly expanded at bar 18 into the figure noted in the previous example (one of Agricola's favourite stock-figures), which recurs, embedded at bar 25 and again further extended (see the bassus's response at bar 28). Following the cadence at bar 31, the bassus initiates another point, this time a cadential gesture immediately echoed in the discantus. The use of such incidental gestures is all the more interesting that the resulting relationship between the voices is difficult to characterize: part imitation, part ostinato, but then again neither quite the one nor fully the other (as Rabelais has it: »Ne l'un ne l'aultre, et tous les deux ensemble«).[35]

An ostinato is no sooner suggested than modified, while imitation is subtly disguised: by embedding the point within a longer phrase, as we have seen, but also by placing the statements of a point on different parts of the tactus, so that its function changes. This is what happens with the opening point: the strong beat in the bassus (bar 1) is exchanged for the weak beat in the discantus (bar 3), and the bassus' syncopated figure becomes the discantus's cadential anticipation (with the resolution on the downbeat of bar 5). My earlier reference to the ›duck-or-rabbit‹ drawing may be invoked here, albeit with a slightly different intention, since the figure may be interpreted as either one or the other; it is not only its mensural placement, but also the tenor's material against it, that determines which of the two readings is to be preferred in each case.

Contingency: »acentred, non-hierarchical and non-signifying«

As intensive (not to say ›thematic‹) as this ostinato dialogue appears to be, it is suddenly abandoned about two-thirds of the way into the setting, and is never re-introduced. This is striking because the setting itself is so short; but whatever the scale of a work, Agricola's music in general is characterized by the localized, limited application of *ad hoc* devices, whether structural or contrapuntal. This has already been observed in the *cantus firmus* treatment of his Mass cycles, which incorporates a variety of systematic techniques (e. g., isomelism, paraphrase, strict presentation, and parody) that may be suddenly introduced, interrupted, or ultimately abandoned and only rarely pursued to their conclusion;[36] suffice it here to point to the *cantus firmus* device reproduced and discussed above as Figure 1 (and Example 3), which is applied only as far as the borrowed tenor's first two phrases before being dropped. But the same attitude informs the free voices when the tenor is treated strictly, as in the *De tous biens plaine* setting just examined, or in works that contain (as far as is known) no borrowed material at all. The large-scale ›instrumental‹ pieces *Pater meus agricola est* and *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* feature episodes running up or down the hexachord in one of the voices (with one pitch being added or subtracted with each statement); but in both cases these episodes are introduced in mid-section, and finish well before the sectional break.[37]

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[35] François Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 15, ed. Mireille Huchon & François Moreau (Paris, 1994), p. 465.

The same holds for most intimations of systematic organization. Similarly, contrapuntal *idées fixes* (often but not necessarily ostinatos: see Example 11) erupt into the musical discourse almost at random, and disappear as suddenly as they took hold. In view of this last example in particular, the *perpetuum mobile* setting of *De tous biens plaine* II (as shown in Figure 2) is an anomaly, since its minim motion in the free voices is maintained throughout. Such occasional exceptions notwithstanding, this episodic approach to form bears out on the level of local invention what has been observed in the treatment of borrowed material in Agricola's Mass cycles.

Agricola's aesthetic is thus placed under the signs of contingency and accident, alongside that of ornament. The preference for episodic or *ad hoc* procedures reminds us that »the rhizome is acentred«,[38] for which one can read, is governed by no overriding structuring discourse or principle. This

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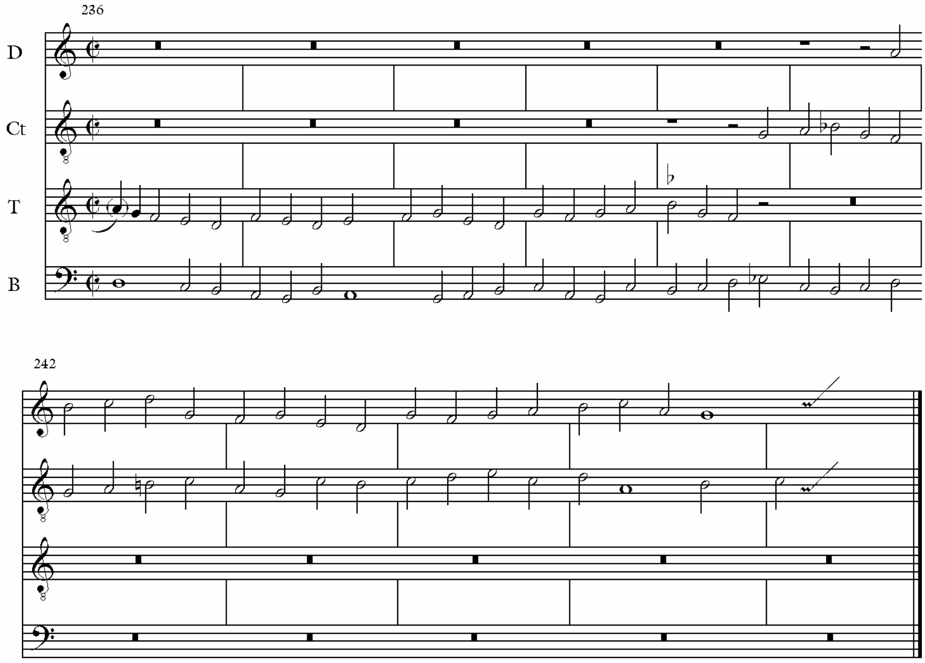
[36] Fitch, Agricola (cf. fn. 1), pp. 69–83. Cf. Deleuze & Guattari's development of the notion of »rupture asignifiante« (»asignifying rupture«): »Un rhizome peut être rompu, brisé en un endroit quelconque, il reprend suivant telle ou telle de ses lignes ou suivant d'autres lignes« (»A rhizome may be broken or shattered at a given point, and will continue along one or other of its lines, or along other lines«): Deleuze & Guattari, Mille plateaux (cf. fn. 2), p. 16.

[37] See *Pater meus* at bb. 26–37, Bassus, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 20), p. 108, and in *Cecus* at bb. 40–9 and 66–72, Tenor, ibid., pp. 103–4. A possible precedent for these passages is the Agnus Dei II of Ockeghem's *Missa Quinti toni*, in which the voice in question (the bassus) is similarly free rhythmically; but its material consists entirely of the hexachordal run, with only a concluding flourish added at the end.

[38] »Contre les systèmes centrés (même polycentrés), à communication hiérarchique et liaisons préétablies, le rhizome est un système acentré, non hiérarchique et asignifiant …« (»Against centred (or even poly-centred) systems, with hierarchical relations and pre-established connections, the rhizome is acentred, non-hierarchical and non-signifying …«): Deleuze & Guattari, Mille plateaux (cf. fn. 2), p. 32.



Example 11: Alexander Agricola, *Missa In myne zyn*, Credo, bb. 236–46 (119–22)

feature again distinguishes the rhizomatic from the arborescent, which tends to privilege a single over-arching organizational procedure over the course of an entire work. But as I observed in my previous study, Deleuze and Guattari strongly argue against the treatment of the two models as rigorously antithetical.[39] A practical confrontation between them may reveal not only the differences, but also some underlying similarities. At this point, one can turn to Josquin, a composer whose music I have previously invoked as an exemplar of arborescence.

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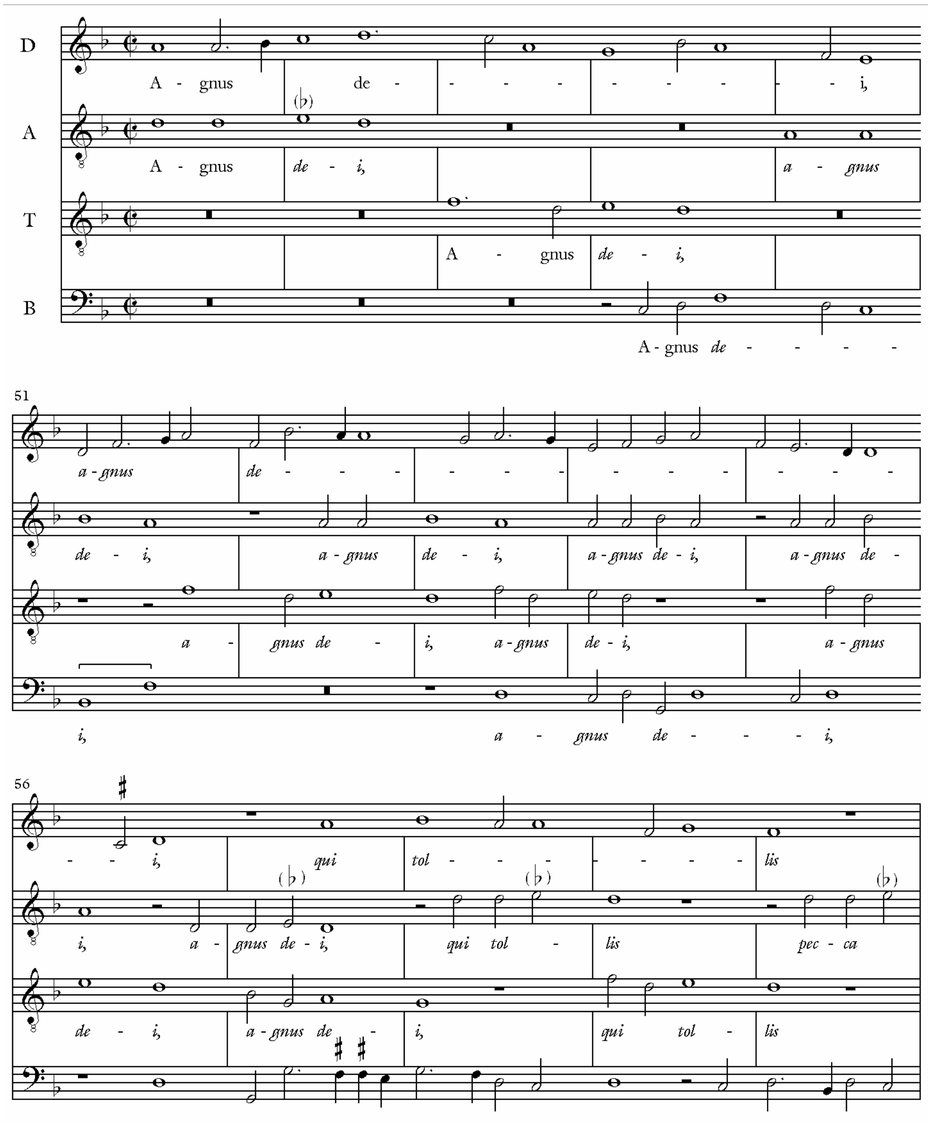
[39] »S'il est vrai que... le rhizome [a] essentiellement des entrées multiples, on considérera même qu'on peut y entrer par le chemin ... des arbres-racine ...« (»Although it is true that ... the rhizome essentially has multiple points of entry, one must even consider that one may enter them ... by way of the tree/root«): Deleuze & Guattari, Mille plateaux (cf. fn. 2), p. 14.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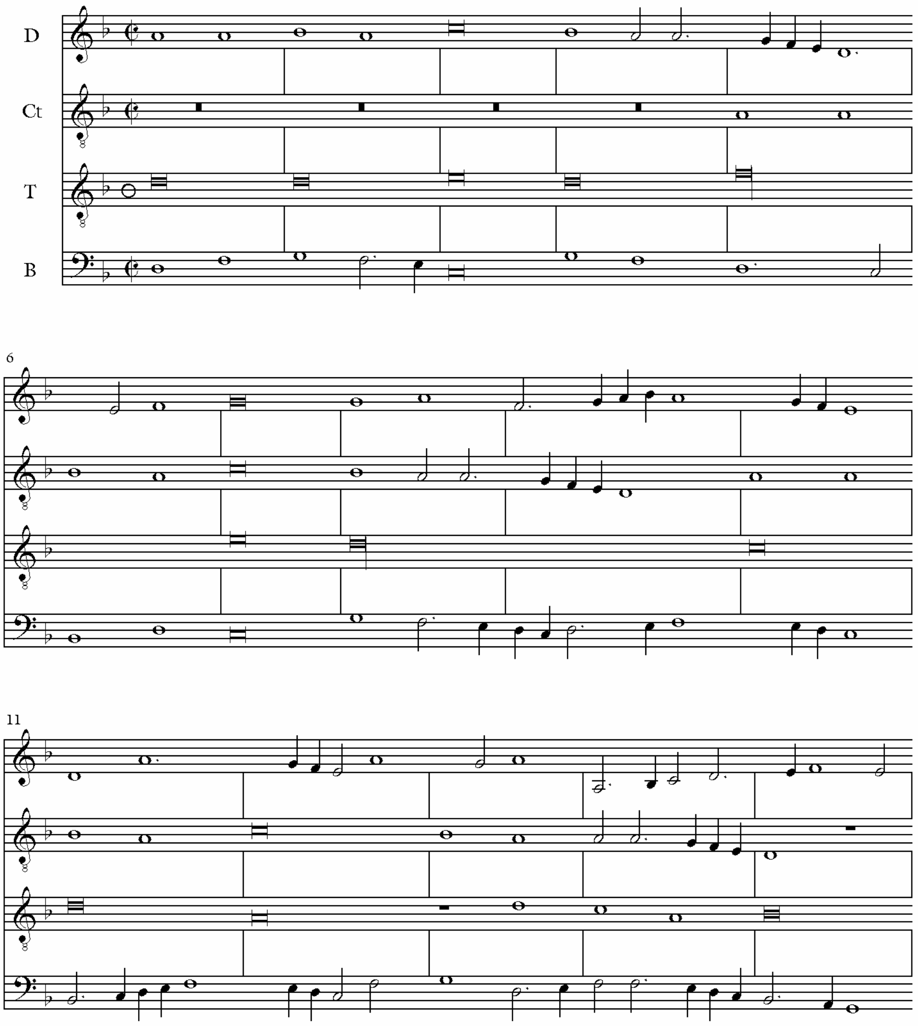
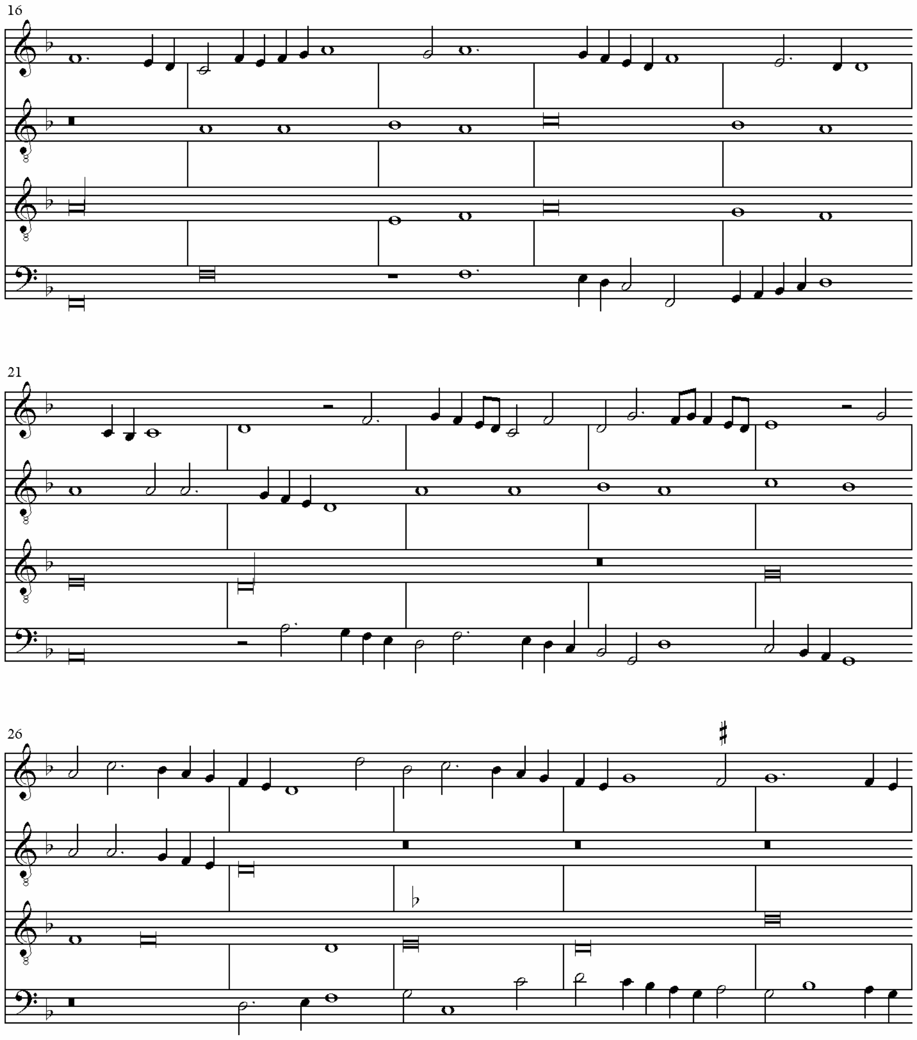
de - i, a - gnus de - i, qui tol - lis

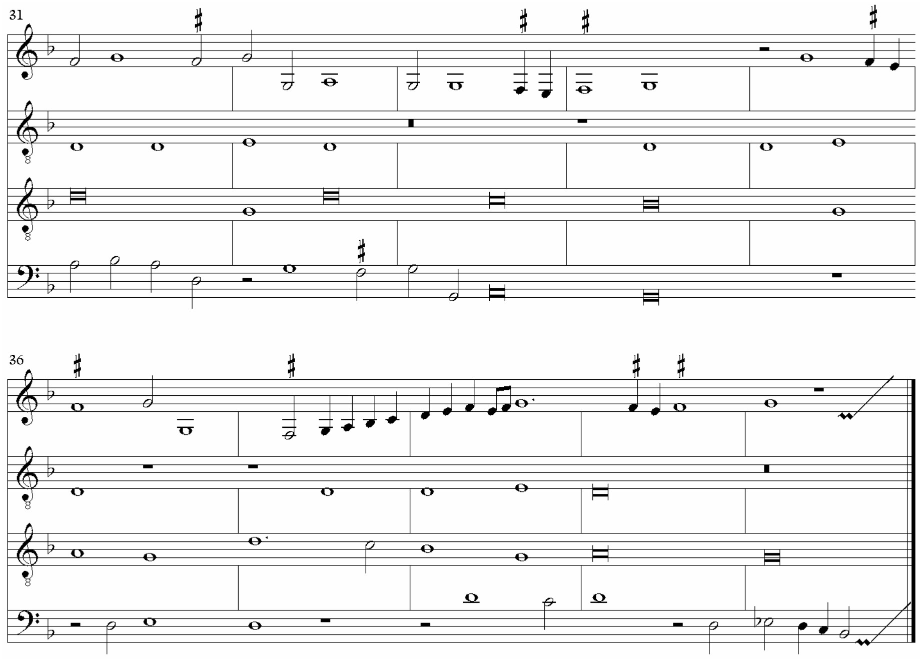
Example 12: Josquin Desprez, *Missa Faisant regretz*, Agnus Dei, bb. 46–60



Example 13: Alexander Agricola, *Tout a par moy* I, bb. 1–40 (1–20) (continued on next pages)



Example 13 (continued on next page)



Example 13 (continued)

The relationship between Josquin's *Missa Faisant regretz*[40] (and more specifically its final Agnus Dei, the beginning of which is reproduced as Example 12) and Agricola's four-voice setting of the tenor of Walter Frye's »Tout a par moy«[41] (see Example 13) has already been discussed in the literature. The parallels are clear. The first part of Agricola's setting incorporates the first four notes of the song's A section as an ostinato in the contratenor (corresponding to the song's A section) on several pitch-levels against the song tenor, followed in the second part by the first four notes of the song's B section (setting the words »faisant regretz«). In addition to this basic ground plan, Agricola's setting begins with a motif in the discantus that paraphrases the song tenor's first seven pitches (bb. 1–5). This is immediately echoed in the contratenor (bb. 5–9), which then repeats the phrase a further three times. On each repetition the duration of the song tenor's seventh note is modified. Only after the fourth statement (bb. 23–7) does the contratenor introduce the four-note ostinato that prevails for the rest of the section. In Josquin's setting, the song's discantus appears in the corresponding voice of the Mass. Of the remaining voices, only the bassus is freely composed. The same four-note ostinatos both appear simultaneously (again on several pitch-levels), each one confined to one of the middle voices, neither of which incorporates any other material.

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[40] Edition in *New Josquin Edition*, vol. 8: *Masses Based on Secular Polyphonic Songs* 2, ed. Barton Hudson (Utrecht, 1995), pp. 2–29.

[41] See M. Jennifer Bloxam, »Masses on Polyphonic Songs,« *The Josquin Companion*, ed. Richard Sherr (Oxford, 2000), pp. 174–5.

As Jennifer Bloxam has remarked, the question which setting inspired the other cannot be decided on the available evidence. On the other hand, the differences between the two versions are emblematic of their composers' respective approaches. The elegance of Josquin's solution speaks for itself: the functional distinction between the four voices, rigorously maintained throughout; the simultaneous deployment of two analogously derived ostinatos; the near-saturation of the polyphonic fabric with material derived from the song; these features testify to the strongly aborescent tendency of the Josquinian aesthetic, hierarchical, rigorous, and economical.

But Agricola's solution is just as clear an embodiment of rhizomatic priorities. Its apparent inconsistencies are consonant with the composer's general practice: witness the repetition of the opening discantus motif in the tenor voice, its arbitrary prolongations of the seventh note,[42] and especially its sudden interruption in favour of the four-note ostinato (a typical case of an *ad hoc* procedure being abruptly abandoned). Consider, too, the final statements of the four-note ostinato in the two sections, each of which incorporates a characteristic element of surprise: the first appears on a pitch not used previously (and never introduced again), after all the other voices, including the tenor, have come to a standstill; the second lies nearly entirely outside the tenor cursus, its first pitch forcing a false relation with the (implicit) sharpened leading-note of the discantus.

Behind these technical differences one discerns vastly divergent aesthetic criteria. Josquin's double *obbligo* makes it possible to account for every note of all but one of the four voices; but such a priority is quintessentially an arborescent one, and almost entirely foreign to Agricola's aesthetic. Proof of this may be sought in the note-density of Josquin's setting which, though low even by his standards, is properly inconceivable within the context of Agricola's textless tenor re-workings.

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[42] Note that even this process is not pursued systematically, since in the fourth statement the duration of the seventh pitch reverts to that in the first statement.

This note-density is a direct result of the double *obbligo*, which also accounts for the near-saturation of the music with material from the song. But as we have seen, a tendency to motivic saturation is also a feature of Agricola's music; there are clear signs of it in this setting, albeit carried out in a very different manner to Josquin. With rare exceptions (e. g., the song tenor's final melisma), the two free voices make little reference to the song tenor or to the contratenor's ostinato; on the other hand, their melodic and rhythmic usage is very consistent internally. The tail end of the contratenor's initial ostinato (bb. 8–9, which is not drawn from the song itself) is taken up several times, most often in tandem with its statements in the contratenor. Another characteristic passage is the discantus's repeated cadential circlings around the pitch-class *g* at bars 29–40, which are closely mirrored in the bassus.

By definition, these strategies are not pursued consistently, but the web of allusions thus created is equally distinctive. From this perspective, Josquin's freely composed bassus has fewer internal correspondences than either of Agricola's, and contrasts sharply with the quasi-Webernian economy of the middle voices; and it is worth observing how frequently Josquin modifies the ostinatos' durations in the interests of maintaining their melodic integrity. These flexible features are signs of rhizomatic (i. e., contingent) behaviour in Josquin's realization.

Conclusion: rhizomes vs. roots?

The preceding point, and the confrontation of the two settings as a whole, demonstrates that rhizomatic and arborescent tendencies may indeed exist in the same work, just as one and the same principle (here, the tendency to motivic saturation) may be a shared characteristic of both. The attractiveness of the two concepts lies precisely in their interdependence. Important as the Josquinian ›economy aesthetic‹ was to become, both for later sixteenth-century and modern reception-history,[43] a significant proportion of music from the turn of the sixteenth century incorporates, to a greater or lesser extent, the types of rhizomatic behaviour outlined throughout this article.

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[43] For a relatively recent discussion of this ›economy aesthetic‹ in relation to Josquin's style, see John Milsom, »Analyzing Josquin,« *The Josquin Companion*, ed. Richard Sherr (Oxford, 2000), p. 435. Milsom's remarks imply that the aesthetic ideals embodied in the Josquin canon (the construction of which is circularly derived from the adherence of pieces to these principles) continue to enjoy wide currency. The attractions of the arborescent approach to latter-day musicology may be gauged in the very process of confronting these two settings of *Tout a par moy*: the procedures governing Josquin's version can be summarized in a couple of short sentences, but those of Agricola's cannot.

As I hope to have shown, these seem particularly well suited to a description of Agricola's style, but by way of conclusion I would observe that the same tendencies can be discerned in the works of many of his contemporaries. (A strongly ornamental bent is noticeable, for instance, in much of Antoine Brumel's output, though even a cursory examination of his works suggests that his stylistic profile is exceptionally varied.) This is especially true of freely composed pieces, but it also holds for works based on pre-existent material. In fact, few composers are as systematic in their deployment of the latter as Josquin; and within his own output, borrowed material is more freely treated in some works than in others (the presumably late *Missa Pange lingua* being a case in point). At the opposite end of the spectrum, one finds even in Ockeghem (so often held up as the archetype of ›asystematic‹ procedures) certain very marked tendencies to arborescence – the use of canon, most obviously – that Agricola, for one, conspicuously avoids.[44]

Throughout this and the preceding study of Agricola's style, Ockeghem has already been invoked several times as a possible (and in my view, probable) influence. It seems to me also that the case of Ockeghem illustrates the potential for the wider applicability of the rhizome in articulating certain types of compositional decision-making, whether formal, structural or contrapuntal. The presence of canon within his output is a powerful counterweight to the asystematic procedures in the works otherwise freely composed, or based on borrowed material, and on which recent scholarship has dwelt significantly. For centuries, it resulted in a significant distortion of the composer's reputation, due to the fixation of sixteenth-century theorists, followed by eighteenth-century historiographers, on two or three canonic and enigmatic works, to the exclusion of all else. In fact, the coexistence within his output of the two tendencies, each expressed in the strongest possible manner, is arguably the most distinctive and original feature of his stylistic profile. As anyone well acquainted with his music will testify, the melodic construction of his canonic works is virtually indistinguishable from that of the rest of his output; hence, the oppositional framework within which constructivist and ›asystematic‹ tendencies are traditionally articulated can hardly adequately reflect the situation, let alone do justice to its complexity. Rather than view the stylistic profiles of composers, or of individual works, in terms of discrete parameters whose treatment occupies a specific point on a continuum from simplicity to complexity, a model based on the interdependence of arborescent and rhizomatic conceptions can assist us in our aspiration to apprehend as a totality the potentially bewildering multiplicity of musical discourses co-existing within a particularly rich historical period: »diversi diversa cantant«.

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[44] The few instances of the technique, though characteristically unusual, are hardly challenging technically. See for example the canon in inversion (with rubric »facie ad faciem«) in his »Salve regina« I, bb. 100–21, in Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 15), vol. 4: *Motetta, Contrafacta*, 1966, pp. 15–6.

Peter Woetmann Christoffersen

Alexander Agricola's Vocal Style – »bizarre« and »surly«, or the Flower of the Singer's Art?[*]

There can be no doubt that the ›classical‹ works by Josquin are easy to understand and accessible to a modern audience, just as they were to his contemporaries and subsequent generations. One can say that elements of his musical expression were canonized as a stylistic norm during the first half of the 16th century. Agricola, on the other hand, seems rather inaccessible to the modern music lover, and even to the music historian, in spite of the fact that during his lifetime his music enjoyed a favour comparable to the popularity of Josquin's music.[1] Ever since August Wilhelm Ambros characterized Agricola with the words »Among his contemporaries, he is the strangest and most bizarre, and indulges in the most peculiar flights of fancy – moreover, he tends to write a kind of surly, bad-tempered, dark counterpoint,«[2] most commentators have tended to focus on the richly decorated surface of his music, with its many runs, sequences, leaps, and restless, syncopated part writing. His modern fame seems to be based on the reputation of him being rather peculiar. Perhaps as a result, his music – especially his sacred music – is rarely heard in live performances. The discrepancy between his fame around the year 1500 and his reputation today suggests that Agricola's musical language contains elements whose appeal was lost in the generations following 1500.

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[*] I wish to express my gratitude to Nicole Schwindt and the Hochschule für Musik Trossingen for the invitation to speak about Agricola's vocal style. Without this gentle push in the right direction, I probably would not have turned to this subject at the present stage of my research. My warmest thanks also to Jane Alden for her great help in transforming my English into something readable.

[1] Cf. Honey Meconi, »Josquin and Musical Reputation,« *Essays on Music and Culture in Honor of Herbert Kellman*. Collection »Épitome musicale« 8, ed. Barbara Haggh (Paris, 2001), pp. 280–97. Agricola's secular music had an especially wide circulation: in a French provincial collection of music from around 1520, Agricola is the only composer whose name is attached to several pieces of music (seven); he is represented in the MS by 14 compositions in all (including four duplicates), surpassed only by Loyset Compère with 17 (two duplicates), while Josquin accounts for only two, see Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the Music Collection of a Copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library, Copenhagen*, (Copenhagen, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 36–40.

[2] August Wilhelm Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 3: *Geschichte der Musik im Zeitalter der Renaissance bis zu Palestrina* (Leipzig, 1868), p. 243: »Er ist unter seinen Genossen der wunderlichste und bizarrste und ergeht sich in höchst sonderbaren Phantastereien – gleich daneben setzt er irgend einen mürrischen, übellaunigen, finstern Contrapunkt.« Translated by Fabrice Fitch in the article »Agricola« in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edn. (London, 2001), vol. 1, p. 228.

This essay will offer a new premise for understanding Agricola's music by isolating one of these elements. I shall explore the possibility that Agricola, to a greater degree than his contemporaries, held on to or embraced the sound world of professional singers from the second half of the 15th century. I will suggest that this is part of the reason why his music came, in posterity, to be viewed as »bizarre« and difficult. I wish to shift focus away from an analysis of structures and towards an interest in the sound and meaning of the music – to consider how the music was heard and how it relates to the performance traditions of the age. Consequently the music of Agricola and his colleagues has to be heard against a background of some necessarily hypothetical notions of the music created *alla mente* as part of the singers' daily work in courtly and ecclesiastical institutions. However, this background of improvised traditions should in general not be regarded as provider of actual models for written compositions, even though exactly this relationship can easily be found in the surviving repertory (to be discussed below). The improvised traditions should rather be kept in mind as widespread frameworks of musical understanding and sound identities, which composers had to relate to in the contemporary sound world.[3]

The singer's art

That Agricola was very much in demand as a singer is confirmed by the few facts we know concerning his life and career. One cannot think of any better recommendation than the preserved letters from King Charles VIII of France, and from Ferrante I of Naples, who both wanted the services of the singer.[4] The epitaphs praise Agricola as much as a singer as a composer; one

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[3] For a discussion of the term »Improvisation« see Leo Treitler's essays »Medieval Improvisation« and »Written Music and Oral Music: Improvisation in Medieval Performance« with new introductions in id., *With Voice and Pen. Coming to know Medieval Song and How It Was Made* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 1–67.

[4] Cf. Allan W. Atlas, »Alexander Agricola and Ferrante I of Naples,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30 (1977), pp. 313–9, and Allan W. Atlas and Anthony M. Cummings, »Agricola, Ghiselin, and Alfonso II of Naples,« *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989), pp. 540–8.

French commemorative poem admonishes Death for removing »a singer excelling all other musicians« – a »triumphant voice« and an »exquisite mouth famed in music«.[5]

I always wondered what could make a singer from the northern regions of Europe so highly sought-after. It is hard to believe that a singer gifted only with a beautiful voice and a good technique, who served alongside other singers of the same category of voice, could cause kings to put diplomacy in action. We need to ponder some questions: Was such a singer in demand as a soloist in the courtly musical life outside the church? The enormous production of secular music suggests that this might have been the case. Was the backlist of written music, which the singer/composer could bring along, and his ability to create new music, something that added value to his services? It is probable that this was more important than we often presume. However, music could easily be circulated in handwritten copies, and the position as composer was just about to be established and still a rarity. As Pamela Starr has shown, with Jean Cordier as her main witness, composing was not a necessity in order to be one of the most sought-after singers.[6] Likewise the positions in the Burgundian court chapel of Pierre de la Rue and later Agricola seem to be less dependent on their fame as composers than on their service as dependable singers.[7]

The high status of singers like Jean Cordier, Agricola and their other northern colleagues was probably the result of the education and knowledge of performance traditions that they had acquired in the Flemish and French institutions of their youths. Employers must have valued their ability to create attractive music *alla mente,* on the spot, and to lead colleagues with the same educational background in satisfactory performances of music based on multi-voice improvisation, as well as on notated music. These skills were in demand all over Europe. Such special abilities became slowly less important as the diffusion of printed music became established, but on the other hand, the easy access to printed music created a much wider labour market for professional composers and chapelmasters.

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[5] »O dure mort ... Tu as frappé dessus maistre Allexandre,/ Chantre excellent sur tous musiciens./ ... Tu as cassé la triumphante voix,/ ... Tu as rompu ... La bouche exquise en musicque famée,/ ...« The poem is published in Rob C. Wegman, »Agricola, Bordon, and Obrecht at Ghent: Discoveries and Revisions,« *Revue belge de musicologie* 51 (1997), pp. 61–2.

[6] Cf. Pamela F. Starr, »Musical entrepreneurship in 15th-century Europe,« *Early Music* 32 (2004), pp. 119–33.

[7] Cf. Honey Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg-Burgundian Court* (Oxford, 2003); I read in this study a steady undercurrent of veiled wonder that La Rue was not more rewarded and valued as a composer by his patrons, see especially the section »La Rue's Significance at the Court,« pp. 83–92.

It lies outside the scope of this study to go into the many problems and uncertainties connected to the study of improvisatory practices. For now, I will refer just to Rob Wegman's influential article »From Maker to Composer«,[8] and to our growing recognition of the degree to which the double experience of working *alla mente* with music as well as in writing enhanced the achievements of composers and singers – as recently demonstrated in Anna Maria Busse Berger's book *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*.[9]

For some time my research has focused on a very simple sort of polyphony and improvisation in the period up to 1500. It is the repertory often referred to as *cantus planus binatim* in which a sound-enhancing countervoice, or maybe two voices, following traditional rules is added to a preexisting tune.[10] It is an art of singing without the need for *contrapunctus*-rules. This type of song is a long way from Agricola's art, but the practice merits our attention because it puts actual singing in the foreground, which enables us to focus on how different the backgrounds and abilities of the singers in the service of the church were, and how different the sound of suitable musics could be.[11] It is helpful to list, as a sort of intellectual experiment, the various types of performances of sacred music involving improvisation current during Agricola's youth, paying special attention to the interaction between improvisation and written music:

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[8] Rob C. Wegman, »From Maker to Composer: Improvisation and Musical Authorship in the Low Countries, 1450–1500,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996), pp. 409–79.

[9] Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley, 2005).

[10] *Cantus planus binatim* was defined by F. Alberto Gallo in » ›Cantus planus binatim‹. Polifonia primitiva in fonti tardive,« *Quadrivium* 7 (1966), pp. 79–89. A few years ago Christian Berktold showed that Gallo's definition building on Prosdocimus de Beldemandis' *Expositiones tractatus pratice cantus mensurabilis* (Padua, 1408), is questionable, and that Posdocimus' remarks rather referred to a discussion of mensural interpretation of ligatures than to two-part unmeasured polyphony; cf. Christian Berktold, » ›Cantus planus binatim‹. Ein musiktheoretischer Beleg zur Mehrstimmigkeit?,« *Beiträge zur Musik, Musiktheorie und Liturgie der Abtei Reichenau. Bericht über die Tagung Heiligenkreuz, 6.–8. Dezember 1999*. Musica mediaevalis Europae occidentalis 8, ed. Walter Pass and Alexander Rausch (Tutzing, 2001), pp. 149–65.

[11] Further on these topics in a forthcoming article with the preliminary title »Prayers for the dead and simple polyphony in a French music manuscript c. 1500 (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale Louis-Aragon, Ms. 162 D)«.

1. Simple polyphony *alla mente* based on tradition and patterns (*cantus planus binatim* and related types) was a very durable musical tradition that lasted for centuries, as late as the 19th century.[12] The same sort of music can be found in written form, intended for use of singers not able to improvise, usually singers whose musical competences were restricted to the singing of *cantus planus*; it is typically in black non-mensural or semi-mensural notation. Around 1500 the sound of simple polyphony had changed from strings of parallel perfect concords to a dominance of parallel thirds and sixths; and in some examples we also find traces of conventional contrapuntal devices, such as cadential figures. This music was closely connected to intercessory prayers, and its idioms can be traced in innumerable works by famous composers, for example in passages with a reduced number of parts (duos etc.) or in highlighted passages in block harmony with fermatas.[13] *Fauxbourdon*, *gymel* and simple polyphony for two, three or more voices as described by Guilielmus Monachus belong to this family of improvisatory practices.[14]

2. *Cantus super librum – cantus fractus alle mente*, for two or more voices on a pre-existing tune, is typically functional music for use in the liturgy; many of the rules of composition are applied.[15] This way of singing lives on as *sortisatio* until at least the 17th century.[16] We find many examples of this type of music in sources copied for the use of singers without a cathedral

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[12] Cf. *Le polifonie primitive in Friuli e in Europa. Atti del congresso internazionale Cividale del Friuli, 22–24 agosto 1980*. Miscellanea musicologica 4, ed. Cesare Corsi and Pierluigi Petrobelli (Roma, 1989), and *Un millennio di polifonia liturgica tra oraltità e scrittura*. Quaderni di »Musica e Storia« 3, ed. Giulio Cattin and F. Alberto Gallo (Bologna, 2002).

[13] A study of the last-mentioned fermata passages can be found in Bonnie J. Blackburn, »The Dispute about Harmony c. 1500 and the Creation of a New Style,« in *Théorie et analyse musicales 1450–1650. Actes du colloque international Louvain-la-Neuve, 23–25 septembre 1999*. Musicologica Neolovaniensia: Studia 9, ed. Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans and Bonnie J. Blackburn (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2001), pp. 1–37.

[14] Cf. Guilielmus Monachus, *De preceptis artis musicae*. Corpus scriptorum de musica 11, ed. Albert Seay (American Institute of Musicology, 1965), pp. 29–30 and 38–42; see also the interesting development of models based on Guilielmus' descriptions in Markus Jans, »Alle gegen eine. Satzmodelle in Note-gegen-Note-Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,« *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 10 (1986), pp. 101–20, especially pp. 104–6).

[15] Klaus-Jürgen Sachs has drawn up the basis for these practices in »Arten improvisierter Mehrstimmigkeit nach Lehrtexten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts," *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 12 (1983), pp. 166–83; see also id., *»De modo componendi«. Studien zu musikalischen Lehrtexten des späten 15. Jahrhunderts*. Studien zur Geschichte der Musiktheorie 2 (Hildesheim, 2002), p. 103.

[16] Cf. Ernest T. Ferand, » ›Sodaine and unexpected‹ Music in the Renaissance,« *The Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951), pp. 10–27.

education, or for use by choirs. In these sources the liturgical tune is often written in chant notation or, if mensurally notated, in uniform note values.[17] Late examples of this tradition can be found in the *Chorbücher* 34 and 35 in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Jena[18] or in the vastly more ambitious Lyons *Contrapunctus seu figurata musica super plano cantu missarum solemnium totius anni* of 1528 (probably composed *in toto* by Francesco Layolle).[19] The only respects in which this category of music differs from the next and last one is the level of the singers' aspirations and the compositional skills of those who, on the basis of such practices, wrote music down.

3. *Cantus super librum*, for groups of virtuoso singers who – Johannes Tinctoris tells us in his manual of counterpoint for singers and composers – were sufficiently skilled and experienced to create a sound comparable to what we hear in composed music.[20] In Example 1 Tinctoris shows how to vary the two *contrapunctus*-voices with leaps and fluent motion against a *cantus firmus* in regular semibreves. The example demonstrates the virtuosity and high degree of complexity he expected from multi-voice *cantus super librum*.[21] The biggest difference to composed music is a certain lenience

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[17] Cf. Marco Gozzi, » ›Cantus firmus per notulas plani cantus‹: alcune testimonianze quattrocentesche,« *Il cantus firmus nella polifonia. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Arezzo, 27–29 dicembre 2002*. Quaderni di polifonie 3, ed. Francesco Facchin (Arezzo, 2005), pp. 45–87.

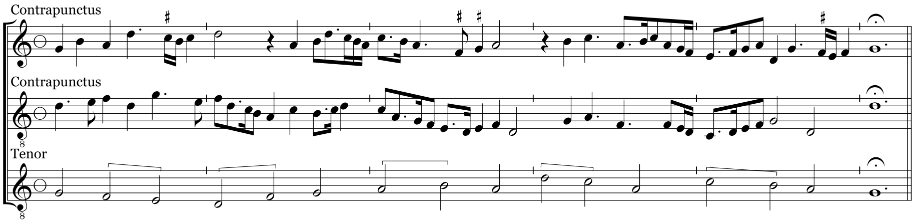
[18] Cf. ibid., pp. 54–61, and Christian Meyer, » ›Sortisatio‹. De l'improvisation collective dans les pays germaniques vers 1500,« *Polyphonies de tradition orale – histoire et traditions vivantes. Actes du colloque de Royaumont 1990*. Collection »Rencontres à Royaumont« 6, ed. Christian Meyer (Paris, 1994), pp. 182–200.

[19] Published in *The Lyons Contrapunctus (1528)*. Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance 21–2, ed. David A. Sutherland (Madison, 1976).

[20] *Liber de arte contrapuncti,* II, xx–xxvii, and III, i, iv, and vi–ix: Johannes Tinctoris, *Opera theoretica*. Corpus scriptorum de musica 22, ed. Albert Seay, vol. 2 (American Institute of Musicology, 1978).

[21] Ibid., III, iv: »Sed ab hac regula eximuntur, qui magis contrapuncto dulciori ac venustiori student quam propinquiori. Quique pluribus super librum canentibus ut contrapunctum diversificent, eum cum moderatione instar quodammodo compositorum longinquum efficiunt, ut hic patet ...« (»But those who seek a sweeter and more delightful counterpoint than one based on neighbouring notes are freed from this rule. With many singing *super librum,* so that the counterpoint may be varied, certain ones employ this great [leap] with moderation, like composed music in a certain way, as is seen in the following ...«, translation by A. Seay in Johannes Tinctoris, *The art of Counterpoint. Liber de arte contrapuncti*. Musicological studies and documents 5 (American Institute of Musicology, 1961), p. 135); see also Bonnie J. Blackburn, »On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987), pp. 210–84, especially pp. 256–8.

towards a strict adherence to rules[22] and – even more importantly – narrow limits on how long the stretches of polyphony could be that were planned in this way. This is not music characterized by temporally extended, involved developments – such phenomena were reserved for composed music. Rather, it is likely that this sort of polyphony was applied to the widespread line by line *alternatim* performance of chant.[23] Improvised music making of this class created a scene for the virtuoso singer where he could dazzle an audience by his virtuosity and the beauty of his voice; he could also impress the learned in music with new artifice and new sounds as leader of a group of singers. But paying specialized and highly educated singers was an expensive way of embellishing the liturgy, and it probably died out with the establishment of bigger choirs made up of local singers, as well as the accompanying easy access to composed music through prints.



Example 1: Johannes Tinctoris, example of *cantus super librum* from *Liber de arte contrapuncti,* III, iv (cf. fn. 21, p. 149)

Today it is only possible to study the virtuoso singer's art with the help of the preserved musical sources. It can be difficult to identify traces of improvisatory traditions, especially if the written music was created by a gifted composer. To compose is a performance for a single performer who has the power to control long musical developments as well as every detail. He can choose to implement a grand scheme using long-range manipulation of the musical material; this can eventually be combined with simple procedures that are easy to grasp by ear, or he can try to hide behind a glittering, highly worked out surface. No matter how he shapes his music, he has to communicate with the singers through musical notation in order to bring the composition to life in sound. The singers, for their part, have to try to live up to the challenges posed by the composer. These challenges may be demands on their virtuosity, their ability to solve riddles or to understand and implement new musical concepts. This process is important in the reciprocal relationship between writing and performance, which in many ways is related to the interaction between memory and writing.

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[22] Tinctoris advises training and more training from an early age to overcome the difficulties in singing *super librum* by internalizing the rules of counterpoint (*Liber de arte contrapuncti*, cf. fn. 20, III, ix), and he highly recommends the singers to rehearse and agree on how to perform their parts – and in this way minimize the differences between music *alla mente* and composed music (II, xx); cf. Blackburn, On Compositional Process (cf. fn. 21), p. 256, and Wegman, From Maker to Composer (cf. fn. 8), p. 444.

[23] This theme is further discussed in my article »Kirkemusik i stramme tøjler. Om alternatim-messer til Santa Barbara i Mantova« [»Church music in tight reins. ›Alternatim‹ masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua«], *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning* 30 (2002), pp. 9–50, especially pp. 42–50.

It is well known, owing to the anecdote published by Johannes Manlius in 1562, that Josquin disapproved of singers elaborating their performances of his music with their own added embellishments.[24] A likely reason for his discontent might have been that the singers' conventional ornaments could easily have transported his carefully balanced musical surface and characteristic sound into the realm of collective improvisation. A striking example of such an elaboration is preserved in one of the sources of Antoine Brumel's four-part *Magnificat Secundi toni*. It appears in a ›normal‹ version in manuscripts in the Biblioteca Central in Barcelona (MS 454) and in the Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel (MS 4° Mus. 9) and in a more embellished version in the French manuscript Ny Kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, which was copied at Lyons around 1520.[25] In the four-part verses the diminutions occur primarily in the superius, causing free dissonances as well as parallel fifths and octaves foreign to the contrapuntal rules on which Brumel's setting of the Magnificat tone is otherwise based.[26] In the two-part verse 8, »Esurientes implevit«, both parts are decorated. Example 2 shows the start of the verse in both versions; the black triangles mark dissonances created by the added diminutions. Note the cluster of dissonances in the superius in bar 15, caused by melodic figuration; these would hardly be acceptable in composed music, but probably recall a sound acceptable in improvised polyphony.

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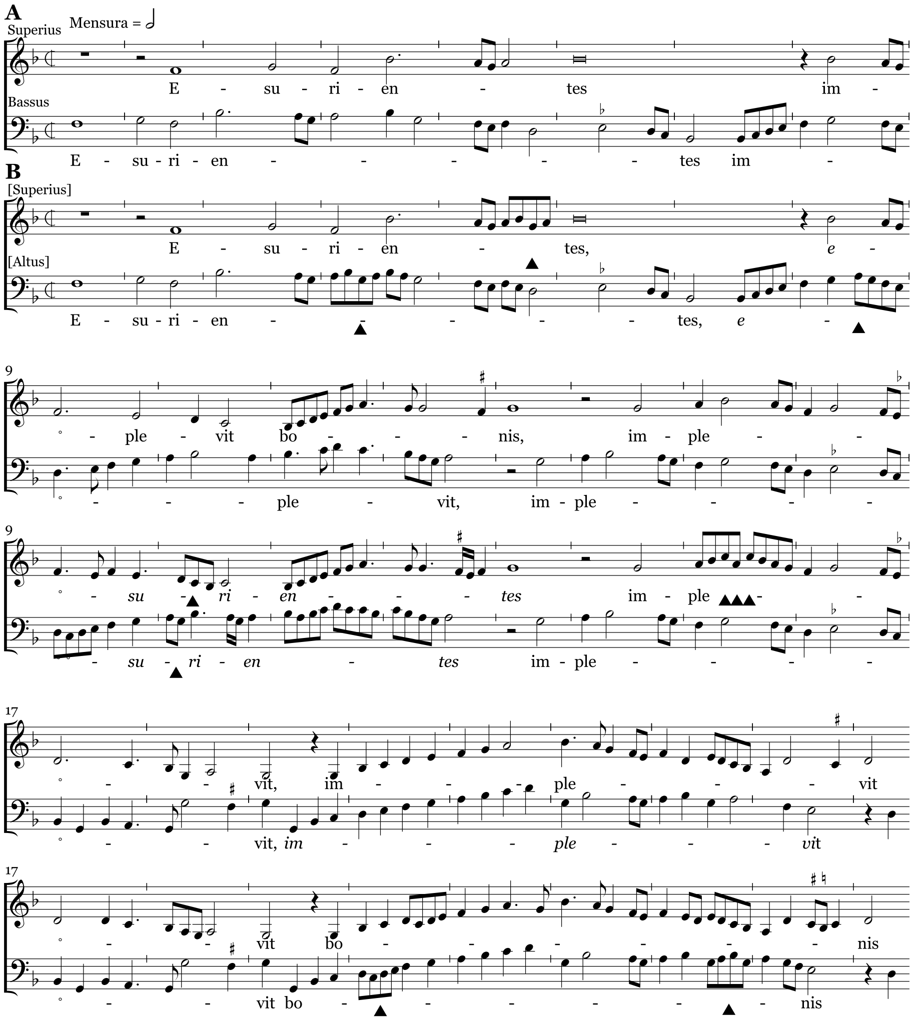
[24] Rob C. Wegman, »›And Josquin Laughed ...‹ Josquin and the Composer's Anecdote in the Sixteenth Century,« *The Journal of Musicology* 18 (1999), pp. 319–57: 322.

[25] For a description of this source, see Christoffersen, French Music (cf. fn. 1). The two versions of Brumel's *Magnificat Secundi toni* are published in an instructive parallel edition in Antoine Brumel, *Opera omnia*. Corpus mensurabilis musicae 5, ed. Barton Hudson, vol. 6 (American Institute of Musicology, 1972), pp. 7–38.

[26] It has to be remarked that Brumel's music even without these embellishments can be compared to Agricola's in its detailed surface.


A
Superius
Mensura =
E - su - ri - en - tes im -
Bassus
E - su - ri - en - - - - - - tes im -
B
[Superius]
E - su - ri - en - tes, e -
[Altus]
E - su - ri - en - - - - - tes, e -
9
- ple - vit bo - - - nis, im - ple - -
- - - - ple - vit, im - ple - - - - -
9
- su - ri - en - - - tes im - ple -
- su - ri - en - tes im - ple - - - - -
17
- - vit, im - - ple - - - vit
- - - vit, im - - - ple - - - - vit
17
- - vit bo - - - - - - nis
- - - vit bo - - - - - - nis

Example 2: Antoine Brumel, *Magnificat Secundi toni* a 4, verse 8, »Esurientes«, bb. 1–25 (based on the edition of B. Hudson, cf. fn. 26, p. 15)
A: as in E–Bc, 434, ff. 91^{v}–94, and D–Kl, 4° Mus. 9, no. 12
B: as in DK–Kk, Ny kgl. Saml. 1848 2°, pp. 324–9

It is easy to find examples of Agricola's use of techniques from improvisatory traditions – I could have used this essay to call attention to examples of his use of free-flowing counter-voices set to a *cantus prius factus*, or to traces of *cantus super librum*-techniques, which can be found everywhere and especially in his reworkings of the music of other composers. But that would not produce a true picture of Agricola as a composer. Indeed, the main results of my studies are firstly that Agricola is much less dependent than some of his contemporaries (Josquin primarily) on highly stylized improvisatory traditions, and secondly that he, to some degree, relies in his music on the entire world of sound cultivated by groups of virtuoso singers, exploiting his rich imagination in structuring this sound on paper.

Sound and singing in two motets

Let us turn to a couple of very simple examples. This may seem odd when the subject is Agricola, but it is too easy to bury the point in a lot of notes when dealing with this composer. It may seem unfair, too, to compare a very early work by Josquin with a mature work by Agricola, but I find that this confrontation may make my point clear.

Josquin's famous motet »Ave Maria ... virgo serena« dating from around 1480[27] can be read as a catalogue of very simple techniques – or, one could be tempted to say, as a pedagogical stylization of good singers' skills in improvisation.[28] The motet starts with a four-part imitation at the octave and prime of the very simple tune for the introductory strophe of the sequence »Ave Maria ... virgo serena«, schematically unfolding in four phrases (see the condensed score in Example 3, bb. 1–30).[29] There is nothing here that could

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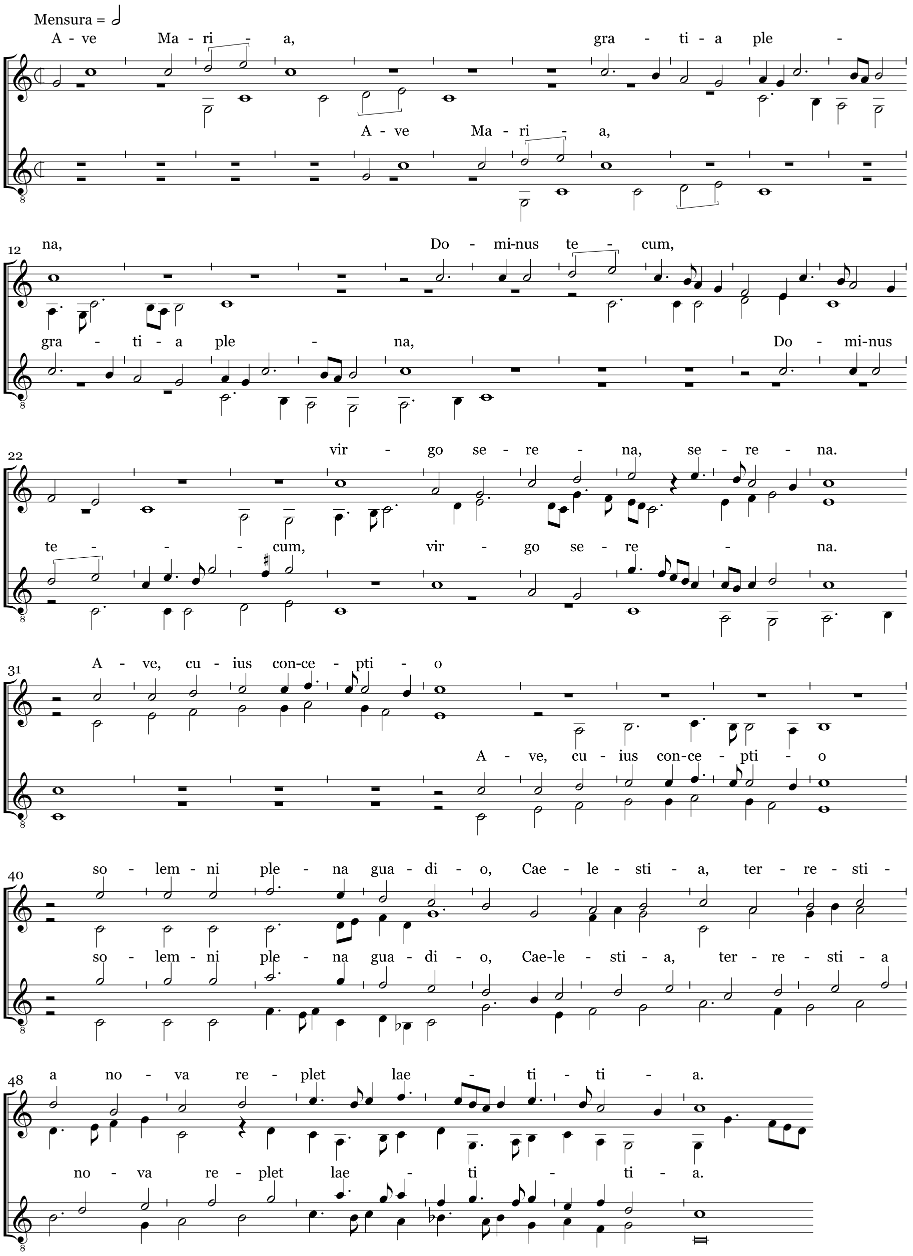
[27] Joshua Rifkin dates the copying of the motet into the MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 3154 (fols. 147^v–148) to ca. 1485, cf. pp. 305–7 in »Munich, Milan, and a Marian Motet: Dating Josquin's ›Ave Maria ... virgo serena‹,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56 (2003), pp. 239–350.

[28] David Fallows remarks in »Approaching a New Chronology for Josquin: An Interim Report,« *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 19 (1999), pp. 131–50, that »... for all its beauty, *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* does not actually contain anything that is at all contrapuntally difficult: technically speaking, it could have been composed by almost anybody.« (p. 137).

[29] The complete motet is published in *Werken van Josquin des Prés. Motetten*, vol. 1, ed. Albert Smijers (Amsterdam, 1925), no. 1, and, perhaps more conveniently, in *Anthology of Renaissance Music. Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600,* ed. Allan W. Atlas (New York, 1998), pp. 159–65.


Mensura =
A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple -
A - ve Ma - ri - a,
12
na, Do - mi-nus te - cum,
gra - ti - a ple - na, Do - mi-nus
22
vir - go se - re - na, se - re - na.
te - - - cum, vir - go se - re - na.
31
A - ve, cu - ius con-ce - pti - o
A - ve, cu - ius con-ce - pti - o
40
so - lem - ni ple - na gua - di - o, Cae - le - sti - a, ter - re - sti -
so - lem - ni ple - na gua - di - o, Cae-le - sti - a, ter - re - sti - a
48
a no - va re - plet lae - ti - ti - a.
no - va re - plet lae - ti - ti - a.

Example 3: Josquin Desprez, »Ave Maria ... virgo serena« a 4, bb. 1–53 (after the edition of A. Smijers, cf. fn. 30) not be agreed verbally and performed satisfactorily by professional singers after a short rehearsal. The next section demonstrates simple harmony in the setting of a stanza from the strophic poem »Ave, cuius conceptio«: In bars 31–5 we hear a two-part texture in parallel sixths with octaves at the start and end – this conforms entirely to the preference in simple cantus planus settings for thirds and sixths. The short line is then repeated by the lower pair of voices, supplemented by parallel fourths to the highest part in the altus transforming the texture into a beautiful fauxbourdon-setting (bb. 35–9). In the second line of the stanza (bb. 40–4), the parallel sixths between superius and tenor are expanded to four parts completely in accordance with Guilielmus Monachus' description of how to perform such things.[30] The stanza's last two lines (bb. 44–53) exhibit a traditional procedure in polyphonic improvisation: a jubilant rising sequence in superius and tenor, which basically moves in parallel fifths (alternating with an octave after every three fifths), made functional, or contrapuntally acceptable, by the insertion of a single note (*b*) in the tenor (in bar 44), which displaces this voice by a minim interpolating a sixth between every fifth; the bassus follows the superius slavishly in parallel tenths and altus fills out the harmony.[31] In a comparable manner the motet sets the next four stanzas and the final prayer in an expert simplification of basic techniques known to and recognized by every singer – with every single phrase confined to the horizon of *musica alla mente*. The success of this motet may have been prompted by the young composers' bold dismissal of everything in the setting of the words not essential to the prayer, which gives the music an immediacy rare in composed music; it is also very easy on the ears.[32]

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[30] Guilielmus Monachus, De preceptis (cf. fn. 14), p. 39.

[31] The rhythmic displacement of a single voice part was a well-known technique, beginning in the late 14th century, used to create momentum in composed music. Guilielmus describes it as a traditional way of performing fauxbourdon with »sincopas per sextas et quintas« (ibid., p. 38) and gives an example of how to harmonize raising and descending scales in syncopation (p. 53). In the 16th century, Vicente Lusitano and Nicola Vicentino still mention it as a basic technique in polyphonic improvisation; see Ernest T. Ferand, »Improvised vocal counterpoint in the late Renaissance and early Baroque,« *Annales musicologiques* 4 (1956), pp. 129–74 (here pp. 148–51). Richard Sherr has made the same observation concerning this passage in Josquin's »Ave Maria« without, however, associating it with traditional techniques, cf. *The Josquin Companion*, ed. Richard Sherr (Oxford, 2000), pp. 333–4; Josquin also uses the fifth-sixth pattern – possibly with a hint at improvised practices – in his motet »Ut Phebi radiis«, especially in its first section on the ascending hexachord (see my edition of the motet bb. 23–5, 48–50, and 55–61, pp. 113–8 in the article »Hvad enhver kordreng skal kunne. Betragtning af motetten *Ut Phebi radiis* af Josquin Desprez« [»What every choirboy has to master. Reflections on ...«], *Musik & Forskning* 28 (2003), pp. 97–118. The same technique of rhythmically displacing the tenor, now at a semibreve value, can be found in the setting of the fourth stanza »Ave, vera virginitas« in triple time (bb. 94–109 in the Smijers edition, cf. fn. 29). Here the simple sixth-fifth formations evolve into a strict canon at the lower fifth between superius and tenor inside the four-part texture. John Milsom correctly identifies this procedure as belonging to the basic skills of singers and composers, as part of the ›grammar‹ of counterpoint, using this

Agricola's motet »Transit Anna timor« (Examples 4a–b) was probably composed more than twenty years after Josquin's »Ave Maria«. Edward Lerner suggests that it celebrates the recovery of the French King, Louis XII, in 1504.[33] After a broad opening gesture, a four-part imitative passage starts in bar 9, which is almost as straightforward as Josquin's opening of »Ave Maria«. However, the imitation includes a detail, which I find rather characteristic of Agricola and the composing singer. It is a small circling figure first heard in the tenor in bars 10–1 (each occurrence is put in a box in Example 4a), which adds life and character to the imitation. It introduces unaccented dissonances, fourths in the tenor and seconds in superius and bassus, generating energy for the rather majestic advance to the cadence in bar 21.[34] It is telling that Agricola keeps the little figure as the characteristic feature in the shortened entry of the altus. After the cadence, tenor and bassus take over in a canon at the octave, using a more extended version of

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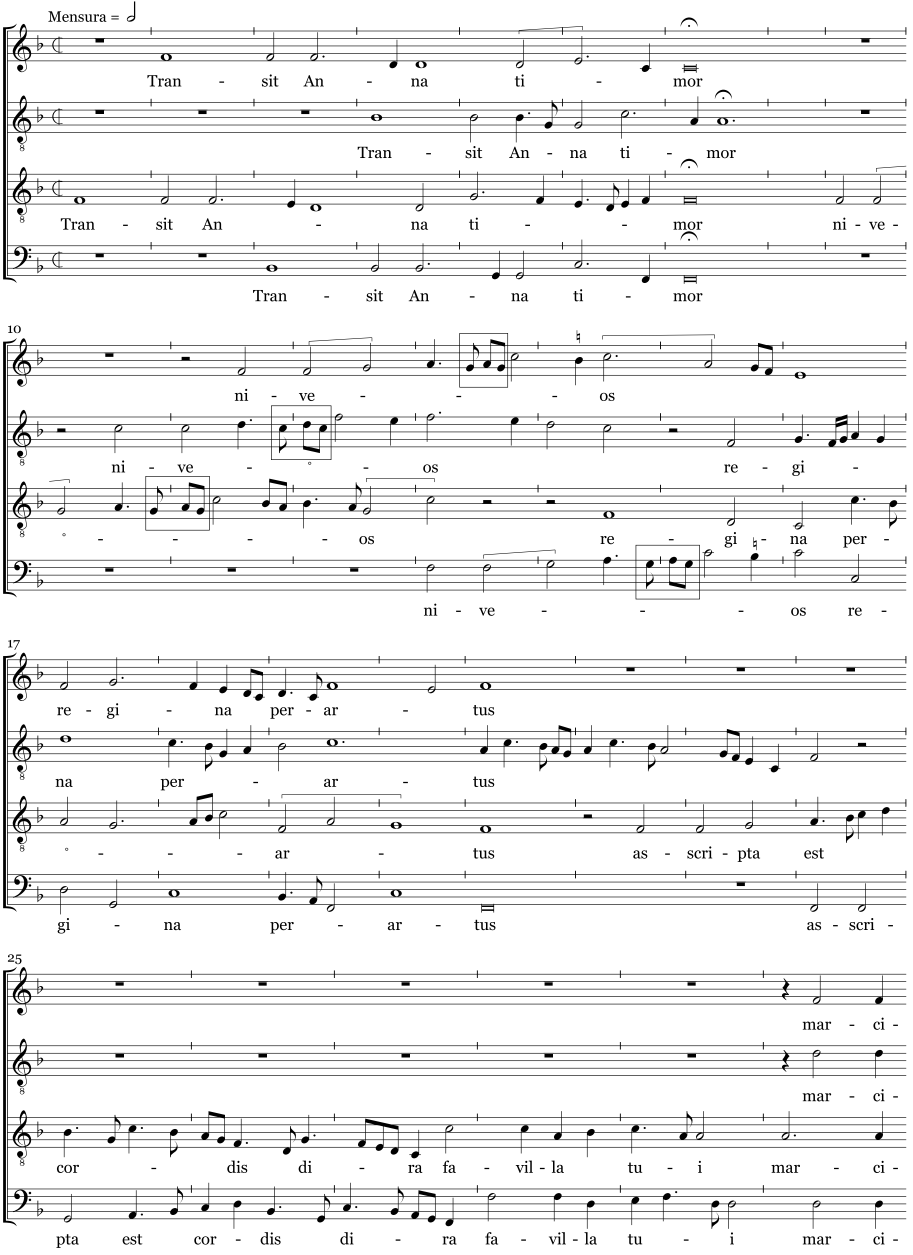
passage and others by Guillaume Dufay and Josquin as examples, see pp. 146–51 of »›Imitatio‹, ›Intertextuality‹, and Early Music,« in *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned*. Studies in medieval and Renaissance music 4, ed. Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 141–51.

[32] For more on the declamation of the text in the motet, see Ludwig Finscher, »Zum Verhältnis von Imitationstechnik und Textbehandlung im Zeitalter Josquins,« in *Renaissance-Studien. Helmuth Osthoff zum 80. Geburtstag*. Frankfurter Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 11, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Tutzing, 1979), pp. 57–72, and Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *Textdeklamation in der Motette des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 167–9.

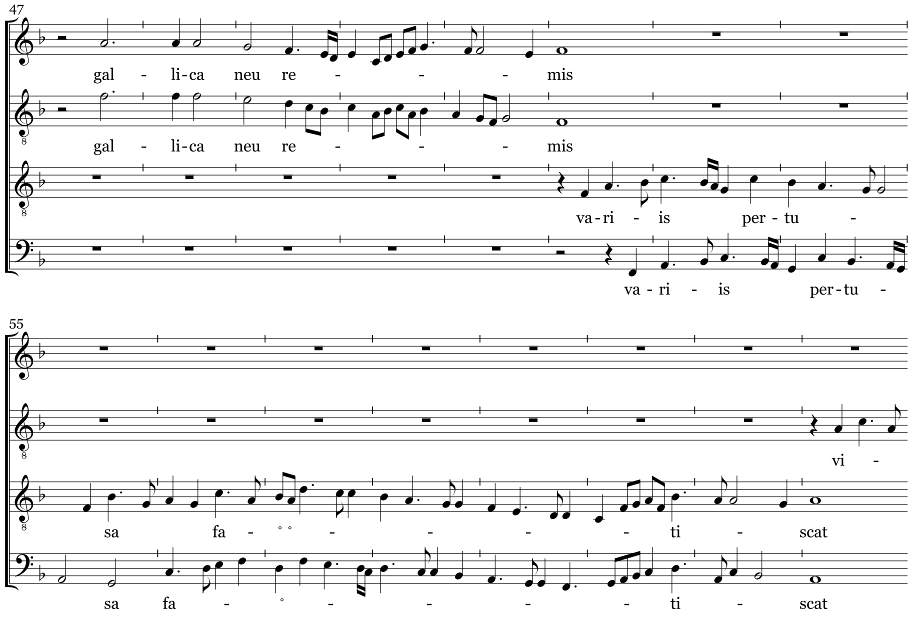
[33] Cf. Alexander Agricola, *Opera omnia*. Corpus mensurabilis musicae 22, ed. Edward R. Lerner, vol. 4 (American Institute of Musicology, 1966), p. XIII; the motet is published ibid., pp. 41–6.

[34] This circling figure followed by a leap of a fourth is not a common feature of Agricola's music. I have only been able to find it in two other compositions in his *Opera omnia*: in his »Salve regina« (II) a 4, published ibid., pp. 20–7, where it occurs in a three-part imitation (S–Ct–B) on »misericordiae« bars 7–10 (in Lerner's edition), and in the introductory imitation between superius and tenor (bb. 1–3) in the motet-chanson »Belle sur toutes«/ »Tota pulchra es« a 3 (ibid., pp. 52–3). It does not have the same striking effect on the sound as in »Transit Anna timor« in any of these occurrences, and in the second instance it does not produce any dissonances at all.

a)


Mensura = 𝅗𝅥
Tran - sit An - na ti - mor
Tran - sit An - na ti - mor
Tran - sit An - na ti - - mor ni - ve -
Tran - sit An - na ti - mor
10
ni - ve - - - os
ni - ve - - os re - gi -
- - - - os re - gi - na per -
ni - ve - - - os re -
17
re - gi - na per - ar - tus
na per - ar - tus
- - - ar - tus as - scri - pta est
gi - na per - ar - tus as - scri -
25
mar - ci -
mar - ci -
cor - dis di - ra fa - vil - la tu - i mar - ci -
pta est cor - dis di - ra fa - vil - la tu - i mar - ci -

Example 4a–b: Alexander Agricola, »Transit Anna timor« a 4, (a) bb. 1–30, b)


47
gal - li-ca neu re - - - mis
gal - li-ca neu re - - - mis
va-ri - is per - tu -
va - ri - is per-tu -
55
vi -
sa fa - - - - - ti - scat
sa fa - - - - - ti - scat

Example 4a–b (continued): (b) bb. 47–62 (based on the edition of E. Lerner, cf. fn. 34)

the theme until all parts – *subito* – come together in homorythmic declamation. Agricola uses, in a relatively simple structure, the same procedures we saw in the Josquin example, but without Josquin's ear-catching simplifications.

Of course Agricola also knows the lure of parallel imperfect concords. A bit later in the motet, the upper parts sing »gallica neu remis« in thirds spreading out to sixths into the cadence at the octave (Example 4b). Again the lower voices respond in bar 52, now in imitation, and they are drawn out in a long sequence (with traces of the fifth-sixth model, now descending), so that the simplicity of expression in the start of the passage somehow is renounced in favour of an asymmetric complication of the course of the music – quite unlike the techniques in Josquin's »Ave Maria«.

Agricola's *Missa Malheur me bat*

This insignificance of symmetry, and the effect on the sound of the music of the small circling figure, are each in their own way essential to Agricola's vocal style. This view can be supported by a study of Agricola's greater sacred compositions and especially by looking at his *Missa Malheur me bat* (on a chanson probably by the Flemish singer Malcort),[35] while keeping the corresponding masses by Josquin and Jacob Obrecht in mind. All three masses were published by Ottaviano Petrucci in respectively 1503 (Obrecht), 1504 (Agricola) and 1505 (Josquin) – and all were thus current during the first decade of the 16th century.[36]

The masses by Obrecht and Josquin have several features in common. Josquin's mass was probably composed with a knowledge of Obrecht's – possibly with a sense of competition. Both of them use segmentation and ostinato, and they make part of their techniques demonstratively audible: Obrecht does this by his long-term scheme of segmentation in the highest voice, which for long stretches unfolds in long note values; Josquin puts text-derived ostinato motives on the musical surface, every time presenting these motives in such a simple manner that the listener can confidently follow the musical development. No matter how sophisticated their contrapuntal techniques are, or how involved their *cantus firmus* treatment, both composers rely in many passages on the sound of simplified or stylized improvisatory techniques – a feature that also helps to make the music recognizable and safe for the listener.

In Agricola's sound world it does not seem to be as desirable to expose the compositional skeleton – or to help the listener feel at home in the music. He is, in this respect, more in line with Johannes Ockeghem, who is also somewhat reticent about his working methods, evading too obvious means of phrasing in his music's surface.[37] Agricola's music shows him as an expert in the art of singing, and he did not like to leave anything to the whims of singers. Therefore every detail is carefully worked out and his demands on the singers are high. It is rare to find simplified versions of improvisatory techniques in his music. On the contrary, he seems to prefer to produce the sounding universe of the singers by subtle means, which can be thought out and developed only with the help of notation. Agricola's music, we might say, looks more like »res facta« than much other contemporary music. For example, he likes, at times, to undermine the stability of the music's basic pulse. This procedure is utterly anti-improvisatory – something that would cause an immediate breakdown in a performance *super librum*. We find a striking example in the Agnus Dei III of his *Missa In myne zin*, where we hear the impressive sound of an improvising ensemble in full flow, while the tune in the bassus is organized in units of at first eleven minimae and later seven minimae – an astonishing, out-of-the-world, jazzy effect, and probably not an everyday experience of singing »on the book«.[38]

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[35] See the discussion of the attributions to Ockeghem, Johannes Martini and Malcort in Johannes Ockeghem, *Collected Works*, vol. 3: *Motets and Chansons,* ed. Dragan Plamenac and Richard Wexler (Philadelphia, 1992), p. CVI; the chanson is published ibid., p. 95, and elsewhere; see also the article »Malcourt« by Barbara Haggh in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edn. (London, 2001), vol. 15, pp. 682–3.

[36] Published in *The New Obrecht Edition,* vol. 7, ed. Barton Hudson (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 1–37; Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 33), vol. 1 (1961), pp. 66–104; and *The New Josquin Edition*, vol. 9, ed. Barton Hudson (Utrecht, 1994), pp. 2–42. For an introduction to the masses by Obrecht and Josquin, see Rob C. Wegman, *Born for the Muses. The Life and Masses of Jacob Obrecht* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 239–44 and 332–3, and M. Jennifer Bloxam, »Masses Based on Polyphonic Songs and Canonic Masses,« in The Josquin Companion (cf. fn. 31), pp. 176–86; cf. also Barton Hudson's very extensive commentaries to the two editions.

[37] Cf. Fabrice Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem. Masses and Models*. Collection Ricercar 2 (Paris, 1997), p. 9: »... the secret of his art lies in the deftness with which he covers his tracks. Thus the twin themes of subversion and concealment run like *leitmotivs* throughout his work.«

I will use a final example from Agricola's *Missa Malheur me bat* to try to clarify my point. It is from the second part of the Gloria, near the middle of the »Qui tollis«-section (see Example 5).[39] A lot is happening in this section. Just before the example starts, we hear a three-part passage on the words »ad dexteram Patris« ending in a Phrygian cadence to *b* – *b'*, which the entry of the bassus (and the final notes in the altus) reinterprets as major thirds over *G* – *g* (b. 189). Now comes a quite remarkable echo-passage on »miserere nobis« – almost in ›*hocquetus*‹-style – emphasizing the major triad on *G*. Everything picks up again at »Quoniam tu solus« (b. 200), in a four-part texture with the chanson tenor as *cantus firmus* in the tenor. This short, quite conventional, passage cadences on *C* in bar 205. The following three- and two-part passages present Agricola at his most fluent and refined. The

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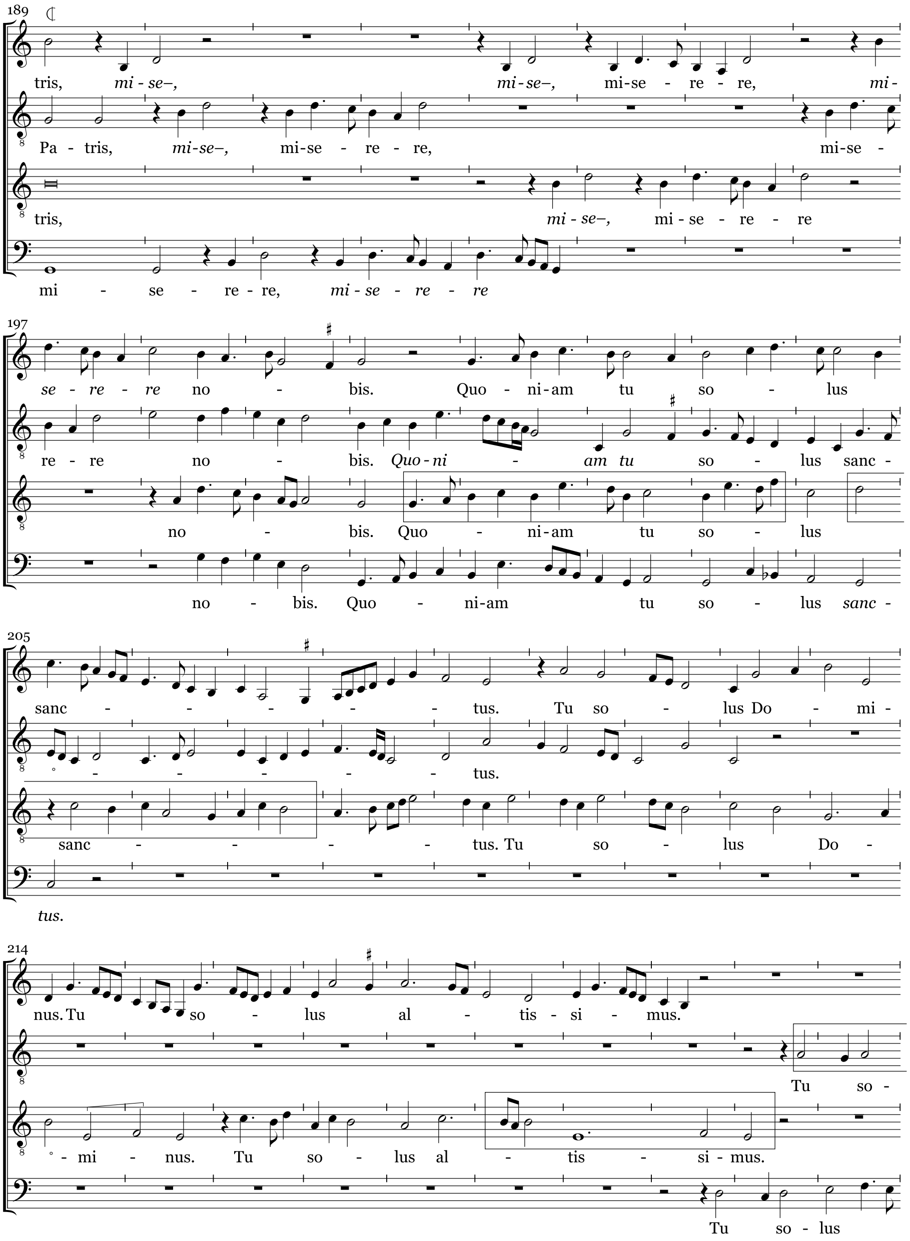
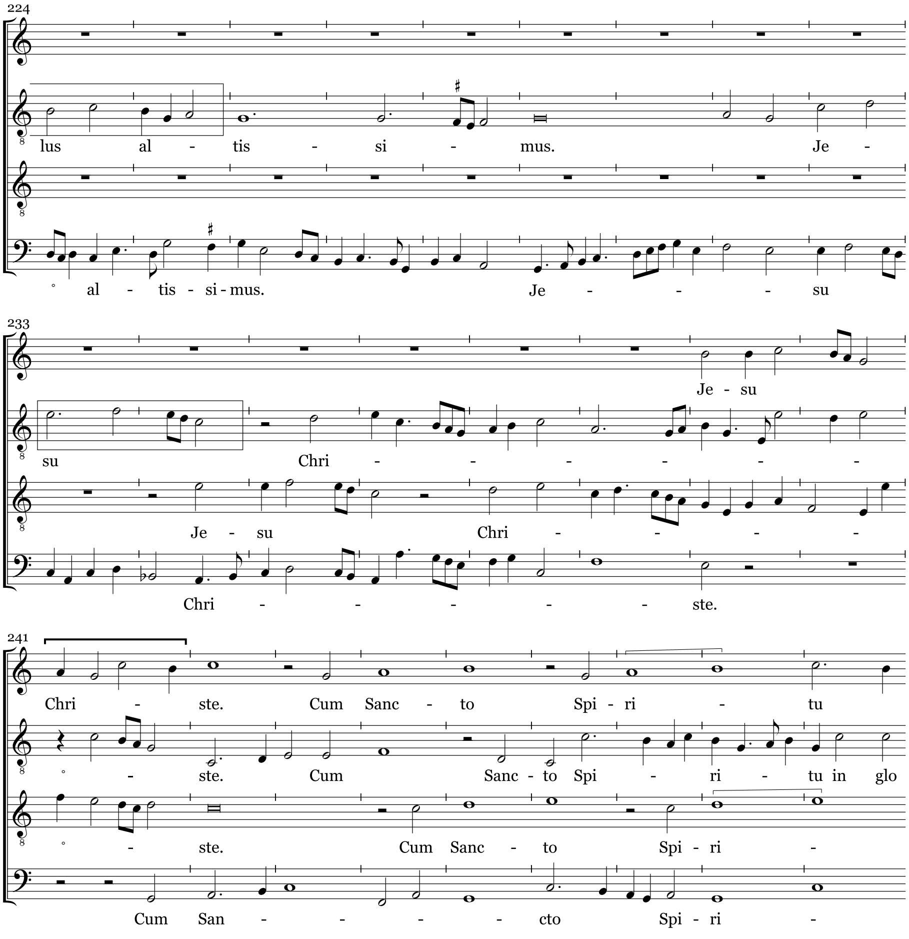
[38] Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 33), vol. 1 (1961), pp. 143–4.

[39] The example corresponds to bars 90–120 of the Gloria in Lerner's edition: Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 33), vol. 1 (1961), pp. 77–9. It has not helped Agricola's modern reputation that Lerner chose to transcribe every section in *tempus imperfectum diminutum* in a 1:4 reduction of the note values, while the current editions of Obrecht and Josquin keep to halved or original values respectively. This ought not make any difference in performances. However, the psychological impact of the pages' accumulation of small note values on singers and instrumentalists cannot be ignored. The very few performances and recordings of Agricola's music have a tendency to be too fast and strained and fuzzy, not allowing its expressive qualities to come to the fore. The examples in the present essay are all reduced in the ratio 1:2.


189
tris, mi - se–, mi-se–, mi-se - re - re, mi-
Pa - tris, mi-se–, mi-se - re - re, mi-se -
tris, mi - se–, mi - se - re - re
mi - se - re - re, mi - se - re - re
197
se - re - re no - bis. Quo - ni-am tu so - lus
re - re no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu so - lus sanc -
no - bis. Quo - ni-am tu so - lus
no - bis. Quo - ni-am tu so - lus sanc -
205
sanc - - - - - tus. Tu so - lus Do - mi -
- - - - - - tus.
sanc - - - tus. Tu so - lus Do -
tus.
214
nus. Tu so - lus al - tis - si - mus.
Tu so -
- mi - nus. Tu so - lus al - tis - si - mus.
Tu so - lus

Example 5: Alexander Agricola, *Missa Malheur me bat* a 4, »Et in terra pax«, bb. 189–249 (based on the edition of E. Lerner, cf. fn. 34, vol. 1, 1961, pp. 66–104)


224
lus al - tis - si - mus. Je -
al - tis - si - mus. Je - - - su
233
Je - su
su Chri - - - - - - -
Je - su Chri - - - -
Chri - - - - - ste.
241
Chri - ste. Cum Sanc - to Spi - ri - tu
- ste. Cum Sanc - to Spi - ri - tu in glo
- ste. Cum Sanc - to Spi - ri -
Cum San - - - - cto Spi - ri -

Example 5 (continued)

descending lines in the superius evolve freely from the tenor's almost strict reproduction of Malcort's Phrygian chanson tenor – with a hint of the improvisational trick of repeating scale segments in varied rhythms.[40] In the next phrase, where the altus repeats the words »Tu solus altissimus« (starting in b. 222), the *cantus firmus* moves to the altus and the bassus takes over the florid counterpoint; the tune suddenly loses its momentum in drawn-out note values (bb. 226–30) – the bassus has to work hard alone to keep the music going. When the tenor enters again on »Jesu Christe« (b. 234) with a repeat of the motive (quoted from the chanson tenor) just sung in the altus, the feeling of the strong beat in the brevis-bars has become rather vague, even if there has been articulated cadences on strong beats in the preceding phrases. This floating accentuation forces the introduction of a brevis-bar containing three beats into the transcription (marked with a fat bracket in bar 241). Agricola establishes a new strong beat at »Cum sancto Spiritu« marked by regular brevis values and upbeat phrasing – it comes as a sort of ›wake up‹ call. The strong beat has now moved to the former position of the relative weak beat in the brevis-bar, and here it stays (with the Holy Ghost) for the remainder of the movement.

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[40] Cf. Ferand, Improvised vocal counterpoint (cf. fn. 31), pp. 152–3.

This rhythmically floating episode illustrates Agricola's precise calculation of the musical effect and how he exploits the model tune. The place where the *cantus firmus* changes from the tenor to the altus is marvellously heard by the composer. The tenor here quotes the model literally;[41] the long note *e* and the semitone movement sets the scene for a strong Phrygian cadence (bb. 220–2), but the superius just fades out with the semitone step *c'* – *b*. The cadence never materializes; it sounds more like a semitone ›sigh‹ echoed a fifth below in the tenor in doubled note values. The literal quote continues in the altus, but the bridging, syncopated pre-imitation in the bassus underscores the rhythmical limbo of these moments. The text in this section has the solemn acclamations to Jesus, »Tu solus Dominus. Tu solus altissimus«, but the music almost disappears into two thin, syncopated strands of melody, very subdued. It is a rather individual interpretation of the text, comparable to the jubilant ›*hocquetus*‹ on »miserere nobis«.[42] From »Quoniam tu solus sanctus« (b. 205) to »Cum sancto Spiritu« (b. 241) we experience an inverted curve of musical intensity, tightly controlled by Agricola. We meet a composer free from conventional thinking, writing for and expressing his ideas through virtuoso singing voices in a music that could never have emerged from improvisation. This music has been heard in the composer's mind and developed on paper using the notation to communicate with the singers.

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[41] The literal quotes in the tenor and altus (of the chanson »Malheur me bat« as published by Wexler, cf. fn. 35) are marked with boxes in the example.

[42] Settings of this »miserere nobis« moment in the Gloria in very active, dotted rhythms can also be found in Agricola's *Missa Je ne demande* (Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, cf. fn. 34, vol. 1 (1961), pp. 43, bb. 78–80) and in his *Missa In myne zin* (ibid., p. 112, bb. 134–5). A sort of ›*hocquetus*‹ appears also in the Sanctus of the *Missa Malheur me bat*, bars 9–11 (ibid., pp. 91–2).

In Josquin's and Obrecht's masses on the same chanson I hear personalities speak though the collective of the singing voices very convincing and with clearly argued points; they invite admiration for their grand structures. In both cases the four (or six) voice parts express a single, fictional, rounded personality, helped by stylization and simplification of the musical details. Agricola, on the other hand, composes for the singing voices without the same degree of simplification and without rhetorical appeals to the listener. His personality comes out just as strong but different. His music builds on the traditions of the virtuoso ensemble of singers, with their richly detailed, multi-dimensional sound. This is a lost tradition, and one less easily accessible to later audiences. It is in the ever-changing sonorities and the care for expressive details that we find Agricola the singer.

Aufführungskontexte damals ...

Warwick Edwards

Agricola's Songs Without Words
The Sources and the Performing Traditions

In 1538 the Nuremberg printer Hieronymus Formschneider issued a set of part-books entitled *Trium vocum carmina*[1] and containing a retrospective collection of one hundred untexted and unattributed three-voice compositions, six of which can be assigned to Agricola. Whoever selected them and commissioned the publication added a preface (transcribed, with English translation in Appendix pp. 118–9) that offers – most unusually for the time – a specific explanation for leaving out all the words. This turns out to have nothing to do with performance, let alone the possible use of instruments, which are neither ruled in nor ruled out. Nor does it express any worries about readers' appetites for texts in foreign languages, or mention that some texts probably never existed in the first place. Instead, the author pleads, rather surprisingly, that the appearance of the books would have been spoilt had words variously in German, French, Italian and Latin been mixed in together. Moreover, the preface continues, the composers of the songs had regard for erudite sonorities rather than words. The learned musician, then, will enjoy the contents all the more for such sounds not being subject to the words. To this end the author even justifies leaving all the songs without attributions on the grounds that learned readers will be able to identify the composers readily from the individual stamp each gives to his music.[2]

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[1] *Trivm vocvm carmina a diversis musicis composita* (Nuremberg: Hieronymus Formschneider, 1538), RISM 1538^9.

[2] Regarding the last point we may note that both surviving copies (at D–Bhm and D–Ju) contain sporadic handwritten annotations with text incipits and names of composers. The latter are not always credible: Agricola's »Si dedero«, for example, is attributed to Jacob Obrecht in the Berlin copy. See further Klaus Holzmann, *Hieronymus Formschneyders Sammeldruck Trium Vocum Carmina. Nürnberg 1538*, diss. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg i. Br., 1956); Howard Mayer Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600: A Bibliography* (rev. reprint, Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 59–62; thematic inventory in Norbert Böker-Heil, Harald Heckmann, and Ilse Kindermann, *Das Tenorlied. Mehrstimmige Lieder in deutschen Quellen 1450–1580*, vol. 1 (Kassel, 1979), pp. 83–91; another list of contents and concordances, with brief discussion, in Armin Brinzing, *Studien zur instrumentalen Ensemblemusik im deutschsprachigen Raum des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Abhandlungen zur Musikgeschichte 4 (Göttingen, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 47–60; ed. Helmut Mönkemeyer, 2 vols. (Celle, 1985); facs. edn. (Cologne, 1995).

The emphasis here on the visual representation of music, the view that composers from Ockeghem's time to the present[3] think in terms of music's intrinsic sounds to the extent that when such sounds can be described in terms of »a well-trained mingling« (»sonorum eruditam mixturam«) they enjoy an elevated status which might be compromised by the distracting presence of mere words, the assumption that readers are well appraised of what distinguishes the music of one composer from another, and above all the tacit indifference to the medium of performance – all represent lines of thought of potentially crucial relevance to Agricola and the idea of »Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus«. And they are all the more remarkable for being expressed well after the composer's death, just at the time when other publishers were beginning to claim the contents of their collections as suitable for instrumental ensemble as well as voices, and when composers were increasingly producing works with melodies deliberately and consistently shaped according to the precise prosody of the words they bore, a notational style characterized by renewed clarity of syllable-note alignment, and finally a body of theory to reflect this.

It seems worthwhile, then, to ask what such an apparently old-fashioned approach to presentation might have in common with that assumed by Agricola himself, and by the individuals who transmitted and performed his music across Europe during his lifetime. In what follows I shall attempt a fresh look at the phenomenon of wordless transmission and what it signifies in Agricola sources generally. I shall then turn to Agricola himself, reviewing the extent to which his compositions can be usefully characterized as ›songs with or without words‹, while at the same time considering their respective performing traditions.

I The sources

French

It makes sense to begin discussion of transmission with French sources. With their apparent close ties to the French royal court, the earlier chansonniers that contain Agricola's work seem not so distant from him, either in presentation or in terms of their relationships to the circles in which we may surmise he moved.[4] Admittedly uncertainties surround both: there are no known autographs, and we lack documentation for his whereabouts for fifteen years following his departure as a young man from Cambrai in 1476. Still, we at least know that he had been employed in Charles VIII's *chapelle* immediately before and after his first documented sojourn in Italy in 1491–2.[5]

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[3] One assumes compilation more-or-less contemporaneous with publication, though since the youngest composer identifiable – Arnold von Bruck – may have been born around 1500 the possibility that the collection might have been compiled up to, say, ten years earlier cannot be ruled out entirely.

At first sight the issue of wordless presentation scarcely seems to arise in these sources. They almost invariably include words underlaid to at least the top voice. There is, however, the matter of partial texting. The chansonniers into which his songs were copied in the 1480s present them, like those of other composers, with lower voices untexted (save, in some instances, for incipits). The practice of setting out all voices with full text, while not new, begins to be the norm only from the 1490s onwards.[6] Partial texting seems to go back to virtually the beginnings of polyphony. Were the presence of individual voices without words applicable to just vernacular song it might be conjectured that they signify the participation of instrumentalists in performance. But since they are characteristic of Latin devotional music too (see, for example, the Cambrai Cathedral choirbooks, F–CA, 6 and 11, copied in the 1430s and 1440s, respectively, the latter by Simon Mellet)[7] in the performance of which instrumental participation was plainly exceptional before Agricola's time, this inference will not do. Rather it would seem that partial texting is symptomatic of a process transcending genre and language whereby scribes (and by implication composers) conceive some voices in terms of the words they are to bear, and others without deliberate reference to them at all. Textlessness in itself, then, tells us nothing about performance practice. We need to look to other kinds of evidence to try to determine the circumstances in which such voices might be played on instruments, adapted to bear words, or simply vocalized. While such evidence is far from conclusive, the weight of what we have from contemporary documents points to *a cappella* performance as the norm in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century vernacular polyphonic song as in Latin devotional music – and right across Europe.[8]

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[4] The sources from the 1480s are the later layers of F–Pn, Rés. Vmc.57 (*Nivelle chansonnier*), F–Dm, 517 (*Dijon chansonnier*), US–Wc, M2.1 L25 Case (*Laborde chansonnier*), I–Fr, 2794, GB–Lbl, Royal 20.A.xvi (earlier layer). The last mentioned comprises what looks like an uninterrupted sequence of eleven (twelve?) chansons by Agricola followed by five (four?) by Hayne van Ghizeghem (attributions are lacking, but can be supplied from other sources in all save two cases in the Agricola section and one in the Hayne; the pivotal twelfth song has conflicting ascriptions in other sources to both composers).

[5] At the time of writing Rob C. Wegman's excellent portrayal of Agricola's life in his article »Agricola, Alexander,« *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edn. (London, 2001), vol. 1, p. 225–229, has yet to be updated to take account of Joshua Rifkin's »Alexander Agricola and Cambrai. A Postscript,« *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 44 (2004), pp. 23–30. In the latter newly published documentation on Agricola's brief employment at Cambrai both forces a revision to the received date for his birth from ?1445/6 to c. 1455 and confirms that Wegman was right to question his former identification with Alessandro de Alemania (and with it the supposition that he travelled to Italy before 1491).

[6] GB–Lbl, Royal 20.A.xvi (later layer), but with only two Agricola songs.

[7] *Cambrai Cathedral Choirbook: Cambrai Bibliothèque municipale MS 11*, facs. edn., introd. Liane Curtis (Peer, 1992). See also Liane Curtis, »The Origins of Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale manuscript 6 and its Relationship to Cambrai 11,« *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 44 (1994), pp. 6–35. Sadly no such French collections of sacred music survive from Agricola's time.

Consideration of the implications of partial texting is a pre-requisite for coming to terms with the few instances of songs copied into French sources with virtually no words at all. Cases in point by Agricola include his *Oblier veult douleur et tristesse* (in F–Pn, fr. 1596, compiled c. 1500), *In mijnen sin* (in F–Pn, fr. 2245, dated 1496–8), *Comme femme desconfortée a 3* (in F–Pn, fr. 1597, perhaps c. 1500 or a little later), and *Revenez tous, regretz / Quis det ut veniat* (upper three voices untexted in the Savoyard B–Br, 11239, c. 1500 or a little later, the first chanson album of Marguerite of Austria),[9] as well as half the twelve songs and motets by him in the posthumous DK–Kk, 1848 (Lyon, c. 1525). Later we shall examine the extent to which some of these compositions may have been associated from the start with instrumental performing traditions. For the present it is sufficient to note that the sources that present them yield no more evidence of realisation by instruments than they do in the case of partially texted compositions.

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[8] See further Christopher Page, »Machaut's ›pupil‹ Deschamps on the Performance of Music: Voices or Instruments in the 14th-Century Chanson?,« *Early Music* 5 (1977), pp. 484–91, reprinted in Page, *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Studies on Texts and Performance* (Aldershot, 1997); Craig Wright, »Voices and Instruments in the Art Music of Northern France during the 15th Century: A Conspectus,« *International Musicological Society. Report of the Twelfth Congress Berkeley 1977*, ed. Daniel Heartz and Bonnie Wade (Kassel, 1981), pp. 643–9; David Fallows, »Specific Information on the Ensembles for Composed Polyphony, 1400–1474,« *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music*, ed. Stanley Boorman (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 109–44, esp. on pp. 126–44, reprinted in Fallows, *Songs and Musicians in the Fifteenth Century* (Aldershot, 1996). For an evaluation of the 1980s debate about the vocal or instrumental performance of the lower voices of chansons see Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music: Scholarship, Ideology, Performance* (Cambridge, 2002), especially the first two chapters.

[9] Honey Meconi questions the Savoy assumption (»Pierre de la Rue and Secular Music at the Court of Marguerite of Austria,« *Muziek aan het Hof van Margaretha van Oostenrijk*. Jaarboek van het Vlaamse Centrum voor Oude Muziek 3, Peer, 1987, p. 50), subsequently maintaining, in spite of Joshua Rifkin's scepticism (»Busnoys and Italy: The Evidence of Two Songs,« *Antoine Busnoys: Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, ed. Paula Higgins, Oxford, 1999, p. 525), that northern French origin is also possible (*Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg–Burgundian Court*, Oxford, 2003, pp. 135–6).

Flemish

The same is arguable for most if not all extant Agricola sources from beyond France. Certain manuscripts compiled by Dutch-speaking scribes are rich in his compositions, as one might expect given his Ghent upbringing and latterly his employment with Philip the Fair. Those devoted to sacred music all belong to the so-called Burgundian–Habsburg complex, copied from around 1500 in Brussels and Mechelen for a variety of clients at home and abroad.[10] In such collections words again accompany the top voices and are usually implied, if not explicit, in all the lower ones. This applies also to some of the few surviving sources from the region with his French (and occasionally Flemish) songs.[11] Two books, however, have conspicuous quantities of untexted items, and it is surely no accident that both were evidently compiled for consumption in lands to which foreign vernaculars would not travel so easily.

As it happens, the earlier book, known as the *Segovia Manuscript* (E–SE, s. s.), was compiled in Spain, but for the greater part by a scribe whose contacts with Flanders (Bruges in particular) are so close, and whose Flemish orthography is so good, that, as Joshua Rifkin observed, it is surely the product of an *émigré* Netherlander, or perhaps »the Castilian-born child of a Flemish parent«.[12] Copying around 1500 (exactly when and where is hard to determine), this scribe provided texts for most, but by no means all of the Latin items, but withheld them from virtually everything with Flemish or

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[10] See *The Treasury of Petrus Alamire: Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts 1500–1535*, ed. Herbert Kellman (Ghent, 1999).

[11] The fragment GB–Ob, Ashmolean 831 (with two Agricola chansons, though one is ascribed elsewhere to Hayne), B–Br, 228 (the second chanson album of Marguerite of Austria, five chansons, texted in all voices), and B–Br, II/270 (»In mijnen sin«, in version with Flemish sacred parody text), GB–Lbl, Add. 35087 (one Agricola song and one motet, both texted in all three voices).

[12] On the manuscript as a whole see Norma Klein Baker, *An Unnumbered Manuscript of Polyphony in the Archives of the Cathedral of Segovia: Its Provenance and History* (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1978), especially the section regarding palaeography and the principal scribe's characteristic Castilian script on pp. 92–108. On the Bruges links see Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 142–4. On the orthography see Rob C. Wegman, *Born for the Muses: The Life and Masses of Jacob Obrecht* (Oxford, 1994), p. 22. On the likelihood that the principal scribe was of Flemish origin, and for a speculative identification, see Rifkin, Busnoys and Italy (cf. fn. 9), p. 528.

French titles. Among the repertory copied are nineteen textless pieces attributable to Agricola. Many commentators assume such copies to be »instrumental« in function,[13] but while several pieces may well have originated that way, and in one instance – Roelkin's two-voice *De tous biens plaine* – that is to all intents and purposes the *only* kind of performance possible on account of range (the upper voice spans an interval of a nineteenth),[14] it has to be said that there is no direct evidence to support this generalization. The scribe's aim was above all the provision of a wide span of notated Franco-Flemish *music*. Latin texts could be supplied if to hand, but, like the vernaculars, were dispensable. The different scribes who concluded the collection with some forty Spanish works had a quite different purpose: all but one of these items are fully texted.

The other source with many textless items is I–Fc, Basevi 2439, copied at Mechelen around 1505–8, probably just after Agricola's death, for a Florentine recipient.[15] Here vernacular text is withheld less consistently than had been the case in the *Segovia Manuscript*. Even so, there is no guarantee that such words as the scribe chose to copy (perhaps according to ready accessibility of exemplars) were voiced or readily understood abroad. Nor is there specific evidence for or against the supposition that the textless compositions, when received in Florence, were necessarily performed there by instrumentalists, even those items that seem to have been wordless, and probably instrumental, by origin. Again, it was the supply of *music* that was of the essence.

Italian

If Franco-Flemish sources represent Agricola as ›local‹ composer, those from Italy, Germany, and (in a single instance) England, testify to his reputation internationally. Until recently the relatively high number of Agricola sources compiled in Italy was thought to reflect – at least in part – his supposed long residence there, especially in Florence. However, with revisions to Agricola biography[16] this explanation is no longer valid. It is in any case plain that, for whatever reason, the survival rate for music books at this time is higher in Italy than elsewhere in Europe, and that the evident Italian predilection for imported Franco-Flemish repertories over native ones was without regard to the physical presence of their composers in the peninsular.[17]

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[13] See, for example Strohm, Music, ibid., p. 144.

[14] It is also in PL–Wu, 5892, and I–PEc, 1013. On potential traps associated with judging instrumentality on range alone see David Fallows, »The ›Only‹ Firmly Instrumental Piece: A Commentary on Benvenuto Dissertori,« *I codici musicali Trentini: Nuovi scoperte e nuovi orientamenti della ricerca. Atti del convegno internazionale »The Trent Codices: New Findings and New Directions«, Trento ... 1994*, ed. Peter Wright (Trento, 1996), pp. 81–92.

[15] *Basevi Codex. Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio, MS 2439*, facs. edn., introd. Honey Meconi (Peer, 1990). See also her »The manuscript Basevi 2439 and chanson transmission in Italy,« *Trasmissione e recenzione delle forme di cultura musicale. Atti del XIV congresso della società internazionale di musicologia, Bologna, Ferrara, Parma ... 1987*, ed. Angelo Pompilio, Donatella Restani, Lorenzo Bianconi and F. Alberto Gallo (Turin, 1990), vol. 3, pp. 163–74; and her »Sacred Tricinia and Basevi 2439,« *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 4 (1991), pp. 151–99.

Louise Litterick, in an influential article on the transmission of Franco-Flemish secular music in France and Italy during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, noted a »gradual dwindling of text« over the period in Italian manuscripts, with their mainly imported repertories, in striking contrast with the stable texting exhibited in contemporaneous French sources. It led her to the somewhat hasty conclusion that »The absence of texts in Italian sources is surely an indication of instrumental performance«, and that because foreign texts when present tend to be garbled »it seems hardly possible that anyone could have sung from these manuscripts«.[18] This is problematic. To begin with, the article appeared too soon to take full account of the debate, alluded to above, as to what textless parts signify generally in terms of performance. Even so, it is far from self-evident why notational change that is evolutionary in nature should reflect a phenomenon so sharply defined as a switch from voice to instrument in performance.

In any event, a year later Litterick pressed her view with a more emphatic and far-reaching assertion:

> Briefly, it has become clear that virtually all Italian sources containing chansons and related genres – a sizeable body of manuscripts originating in Florence, Naples, and various north Italian centres, as well as Petrucci's first prints – were intended for use by instrumentalists and that virtually all of the music in them written by composers active in Italy was destined from the start for instrumental performance. Indeed, this large group of ensemble pieces, which drew on the talents of figures as significant as Martini, Josquin, Isaac, and others, represents the chief focus of secular composition by Franco-Netherlanders in Italy.[19]

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[16] See fn. 5.

[17] See esp. Reinhard Strohm, »Instrumentale Ensemblemusik vor 1500: das Zeugnis der mitteleuropäischen Quellen,« *Musik und Tanz zur Zeit Kaiser Maximilian I. Bericht über die ... 1989 in Innsbruck abgehaltene Fachtagung*. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 15, ed. Walter Salmen (Innsbruck, 1992), p. 89.

[18] Louise Litterick, »Performing Franco-Netherlandish Secular Music of the Late 15th Century: Texted and Untexted Parts,« *Early Music* 8 (1980), pp. 478–80.

[19] Louise Litterick, »On Italian Instrumental Ensemble Music in the Late Fifteenth Century,«

I will return at the end of the essay to the assumption, already touched on, that links putative instrumental repertory in the sources with composers ›active in Italy‹. For the present my concern is that such a sweeping view of Italian secular sources raises important questions about the purposes and functions of notated music when collected together and presented in book form, and about the transmission of vernaculars from one language-speaking area to another.

In this connection it is apposite to ponder the quantity of music that must have been sent or carried from these northern language areas to Italy and elsewhere in the form of *bifolia* or small fascicles, and used there as exemplars for the compilation of more formal musical collections. Some such fascicles, one assumes, included full texts (reflecting normal practice in manuscripts compiled in the north for home consumption). The Florentine copyist of F–Pn, fr. 15123 (*Pixérécourt chansonnier*) presumably worked almost entirely from texted models (he consistently transmits excellent readings of the music but garbled ones of the words). The sporadic and often utterly unusable French texts that appear in several other Italian Agricola sources must similarly derive ultimately from materials prepared and texted by Franco-Flemish scribes.[20] The untexted items in these books may sometimes reflect the state of what was being copied. However, in other instances they must have resulted from the dropping of text present in the exemplar but now considered redundant. Blake Wilson recently warned against jumping to conclusions regarding what this might imply:

> The assumption that the textless transmission of vocal works indicates instrumental performance needs to be tempered by consideration of the immediate context of the source in question. Panciatichi 27 [for example] was probably intended for use in a clerical environment where the interest was in collecting all kinds of music and outfitting it with sacred texts (both Latin and Italian). … The Florentine *cantasi come* practice is directly related to the city's chansonniers, and this context suggests that one of the intentions of the compilers of these anthologies was the retrofitting of untexted chansons with Italian lauda texts.[21]

Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources and Texts, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge, 1981), p. 117.

[20] For example, the portions of the originally Neapolitan *Colombina chansonnier* (E–Sc, 5–1–43, together with F–Pn, n.a.fr. 4379, fols. 1–42) in an Italian hand, I–Fr, 2356, and I–Fn, B.R. 229 from Florence, I–Fr, Panc. 27 (of uncertain origin), and F–Pn, Rés. Vm^7 676 (Mantua, 1502).

[21] Blake Wilson, »Heinrich Isaac among the Florentines,« *Journal of Musicology* 23 (2006), p. 145.

Admittedly, some scribes seem to have dropped texts more or less systematically, regardless of the state of their exemplars,[22] or adopted a systematic distinction between texted and untexted items.[23] Here we may wonder whether instrumental performance is not more compellingly implied. Indeed, as Litterick notes:

> This is explicitly documented in the case of Rome 2856, the earliest manuscript lacking any text other than incipits. A record of payment to its copyist describes the book as being written ›a la pifaresca‹, which clearly points to use by wind players.[24]

This conclusion too is unsafe, however, because although the manuscript in question (I–Rc, 2856) bears the joint arms of the Este and Gonzaga families, and hence is associated with Ferrara where the payment was recorded, apparently between 1479 and 1481, to the ducal singer Alessandro Signorello, evidence linking it with the transaction is shaky: the manuscript lacks the ducal arms referred to in the payment document and any corroborative indication of its scribe's identity. Moreover, with only its seventh piece ascribed to Antoine Brumel (born 1460), to say nothing of the several pieces ascribed to Agricola, Obrecht and Josquin, with their dates of birth now revised to the mid-1450s, José María Llorens's original estimated compilation date c. 1490 continues to look more credible than anything significantly earlier, a point recently underlined by Rifkin.[25] The link cannot be ruled out, but neither can it be ruled in.

Still, the Ferrarese payment record at least provides evidence for the production there of music books specifically designed for wind players. And it is tempting to surmise that, even if the book Signorello copied was not Rome 2856, it nevertheless contained a similar textless repertory. After all, being compiled locally, both books might have drawn on common exemplars, an attractive possibility given that a few pieces in the manuscript we do have show signs of adaptation apparently to fit the ranges of wind instruments.[26] However, the fact remains that we do not have firm evidence for Rome 2856's putative instrumental function, or indeed for exactly how the contents of the »cantiones a la pifaresca« recorded in the ducal library might have differed from those of the »cantiones francese« (applicable to most of Rome 2856) or »cantiones taliane« in the same collection. It might have been, for example, a collection of *ballo* melodies such as those in the manuscripts containing Guglielmo Ebreo of Pesaro's earlier treatise on the practice or art of dancing, complementing the »Tenori todeschi in canto« (German tenors for instrumental improvisation) that also graced the library.[27]

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[22] Those with Agricola compositions being I–Bc, Q 16 (Naples; just two texted items); I–Rvat, C.G. 27, I–Fn, Magl. XIX. 178, and I–Fn, Magl. XIX. 107b (Florence); I–Rc, 2856 (Ferrara), I–VEcap, 757 (Verona?).

[23] I–Bc, Q 18 (Bologna).

[24] Litterick, Performing (cf. fn. 17), p. 480.

[25] Joshua Rifkin, »Munich, Milan, and a Marian Motet: Dating Josquin's ›Ave Maria … virgo serena‹,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56 (2003), on pp. 313–26. Rifkin summarizes the considerable literature on this manuscript over recent years. For a necessarily brief pre-publication response by Lewis Lockwood see the »Addendum« to his introduction to the facs. edn. *A Ferrarese Chansonnier: Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense 2856. »Canzoniere di Isabella d'Este«*, ed. Lewis Lockwood (Lucca, 2002), pp. xxxi–xxxii.

The uncertainty that continues to surround Rome 2856's precise function also characterizes other Agricola sources demonstrably compiled in close geographical proximity to the operational spheres of particular instrumentalists. Susan Weiss, for example, showed I–Bc, Q 18 to have been compiled in Bologna between 1502 and 1505 when Bernardino Piffaro (»a literate performer of polyphony«) and other wind players were also present.[28] However, Weiss did not claim to have demonstrated a tangible link between the manuscript and the musicians, or to have discovered any evidence to support the idea that its copyist thought to categorise the mainly texted first section as vocal and the entirely untexted latter part as instrumental. Similarly William Prizer, having established a Mantua location for a partially texted music book compiled in October 1502 by Ludovico Milliare (F–Pn, Vm^7 676), properly called attention to the presence of instrumentalists there and to the inclusion in the volume of at least some items surely designed to be played rather than sung (though he improperly adduced what he took to be the assured instrumental status of Rome 2856 and Bologna Q 18 in support of his argument for the manuscript's instrumental function).[29] It might indeed be the case that instrumentalists with music-reading abilities were present at virtually all Italian locations where books of foreign songs were copied either without words or in such a way as make it seem unlikely that words were articulated in performance. Nevertheless, the evidence required to demonstrate a reliable link between textlessness and instrumental performance remains to be established.

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[26] Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400–1505: the Creation of a Musical Center in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 270–1.

[27] For citations of these music books in an undated list and in a subsequent inventory of the ducal library of 1495, see Lockwood, Music, ibid., p. 218. On Ebreo's treatise *De pratica seu arte tripudii* and its dance melodies see the edn. and transl. by Barbara Sparti (Oxford, 1993).

[28] Susan Forscher Weiss, »Bologna Q 18: Some Reflections on Content and Context,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41 (1988), pp. 63–101.

[29] William F. Prizer, »Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. Vm.^{7} 676 and Music at Mantua,« Trasmissione e recenzione (cf. fn. 15), vol. 2, pp. 235–9; ibid., »Instrumental Music / Instrumentally Performed Music ca. 1500: The Genres of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. Rés. Vm.^{7} 676,« *Le concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance. Actes du XXXIVe Colloque International d'Études Humanistes, Tours … 1991*, ed. Jean-Michel Vaccaro (Paris, 1995), pp. 179–98.

It is in the context of these manuscript collections that Ottaviano Petrucci's epoch-making *Harmonice musices Odhecaton A* (Venice, 1501, RISM 1501) and its successors, *Canti B* (Venice, 1502, RISM 1502^2) and *Canti C* (Venice, 1504, RISM 1504^3), must be understood. Between them they include eighteen of Agricola's compositions. Petrucci heads his flagship publication with letters from himself and one Bartolomeo Budrio addressed to the Venetian patrician Girolamo Donato.[30] They serve not so much as a dedication for a single volume as a manifesto for all of his imminently planned issues of songs, motets and masses. In so doing they lend support to Stanley Boorman's view of the publications as »manifestations of Petrucci's concern for the beauty of the finished product – the book, not the performance«.[31] Or, as James Haar recently put it, they are »only marginally concerned with the specific contents of the *Odhecaton*. Instead, a humanist tone, exalting the whole enterprise of music printing, would seem to be what Petrucci and Bartolomeo were aiming at.«[32]

Still, in the course of criticizing previous printers for neglecting measured music or polyphony Petrucci at least itemizes what he sees as its chief applications, and hence why its printed dissemination is desirable and beneficial. Without such music, he writes, »we neither pray to Almighty God« (»non deum optimum maximum propiciamus«), »nor celebrate wedding rites« (»non nuptiarum solennia celebramus«) »or banquets« (»non conuiuia«), »nor let anything pleasant in life go by« (»non quicquid in uita iucundum transmittimus«).[33] We might say that in the first such case he alludes to music of private devotion, and hence to the Latin-texted items published chiefly in the motet volumes but also at key positions in the song collections; that in the second and third he exemplifies contrasting occasions of ceremony for which the contents of the mass volumes, and those of songs and motets, respectively, would be apposite; and that in the fourth he vindicates the inclusion of songs less formal in nature.

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[30] The letters are reprinted, with English translations by Leofranc Holford-Strevens, in Bonnie J. Blackburn, »Lorenzo de' Medici, a Lost Isaac Manuscript, and the Venetian Ambassador,« *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*. Festschrift series 18, ed. Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore, and Colleen Reardon (Stuyvesant, NY, 1996), pp. 33–5 and 43–4.

[31] Stanley Boorman, »Did Petrucci's Concern for Accuracy Include Any Concern with Performance Issues?,« *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* 25 (2001), p. 37.

[32] James Haar, »Petrucci as Bookman«, *Venezia 1501: Petrucci e la stampa musicale. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Venezia ... 2001*, ed. Giulio Cattin and Patrizia Dalla Vecchia (Venice, 2005), p. 160.

[33] The translations, here and in the ensuing paragraph are by Leofranc Holford-Strevens, as noted in connection with Blackburn, Lorenzo (cf. fn. 30).

Petrucci offers not a hint of any correlation between these various functions and types of performing medium. He is more forthcoming, however, about the reason for systematically suppressing all vernacular text beyond identifying incipits, claiming »that the Latin name, and above all Venice, where these things had been invented and perfected, should flit on men's mouths even for this modest glory of my discovery« (»latinum uero nomen et Venetum imprimis: ubi haec parta et perfecta forent: hac quoque nostri inuenti gloriola uirum uolitare per ora«). The message seems plain: it is through the promotion of Latin that Petrucci seeks to vindicate his innovative technology. It is this – together with a systematic focus on imported international compositions, initially to the virtual exclusion of anything local – that provides the most effective means of promulgating the name of Venice abroad. Consequently he underlays Latin texts to the music whenever they are available, even when this results in the provision of words that are incomplete or garbled.[34] Those in other languages he discards as surplus to the enterprise's requirements. In due course, the publication of Italian *frottole* and other kinds of native music would follow – prolifically – but only after the project had been safely launched.

Once again there is nothing here to suggest the expectation of a link between textlessness and instrumental performance, contrary to what much of the applicable Petrucci literature over the past eighty years seems to assert or imply.[35] Music for specific instruments would be taken care of eventually with the Spinacino lute prints of 1507[36] and such like. The volumes that flowed from his press in the meantime had a set of purposes that lay altogether beyond such mundane considerations.

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[34] See Boorman, Did Petrucci's Concern (cf. fn. 31), pp. 27–9 and 31.

[35] Beginning with Maurice Cauchie, »L'Odhecaton, recueil de musique instrumentale,« *Revue de musicologie* 6 (1925), pp. 148–56. Among recent reaffirmations of this view (though one tinged with just a hint of unease?) is that of David Fallows: »Plainly these songs were used in Italy by Italian musicians as instrumental pieces, whether or not that seems an adequate musical response to words of such delicacy. Petrucci was just continuing an established pattern.« (»Petrucci's *Canti* Volumes: Scope and Repertory,« *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* 25, 2001, p. 49).

[36] [Francesco Spinacino], *Intabolatura de lauto libro primo* [*secondo*] (Venice, 1507), RISM 1507^5 and 1507^6.

German

While Agricola's music did not circulate extensively elsewhere in Europe during his lifetime, a few compositions travelled to Germany quite early on. They appear more often than not as *contrafacta* in repositories that comprise chiefly sacred texted music, with German-texted pieces and the occasional textless item mixed in.[37] The obsession with exclusively foreign repertories, noted in so many Italian collections, is altogether lacking.[38]

Surviving German collections copied systematically without texts begin perhaps in the 1510s, by which time the custom was just about defunct in Italy. One such is the almost entirely textless D–As, 2° 142a, containing principally German songs, but also a pair of inserted fascicles, one devoted apparently to Josquin, the other mainly (just possibly entirely) to Agricola.[39] Probably from the same decade is Fridolin Sicher's collection of keyboard arrangements (CH–SGs, 530), and a wholly untexted anthology of part-music perhaps also copied by him (CH–SGs, 461), each with five Agricola items, as well as in the latter a four-voice »Fors seulement« by Johannes Agricola, apparently Alexander's brother.[40] Then there is the collection of textless *bicinia* prepared c. 1521–5 in the workshop of Alamire and sent probably to Raimund Fugger the elder in Augsburg (A–Wn, Mus. 18832), which includes two extracts from Agricola Masses; and D–Mbs, Mus. 260, another *bicinium* book, whose textless section includes further extracts from an Agricola Magnificat and a Mass. Also from this period is Bernhard Rem's textless song collection A–Wn, Mus. 18810, with a single Agricola composition.[41] From a little later are the mysterious three volumes of textless compositions of which only discant parts survive, thought to have been printed around 1535 by Christian Egenolff, with four Agricola chansons in volume 3, one also copied into D–HB, X.2;[42] the manuscript additions (*Si dedero* included) made by Johannes Soldeke, a minister at Barth in Germany, to his partially surviving copy of Rhau's 1538 Wittenberg print, *Symphoniae iucundae* RISM 1538^8 (D–GRu, BW 640/1); and the part-books owned by Zwickau town official Stephan Roth († 1546), with two textless chansons, both in the section evidently copied from *Odhecaton*.[43] With the obvious exception of Sicher's keyboard book, none of these sources yield any suggestion that their compilers thought of their textless contents necessarily in terms of instrumental performance.

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[37] For further details see the account below of how *Cecus* circulated. See also Strohm, Instrumentale Ensemblemusik (cf. fn. 17).

[38] Edward Lerner, prompted perhaps by the early circulation of Agricola's music in Germany, noted what he perceived to be local *cantus firmi* as basis for speculation that Agricola resided in German-speaking lands for a period; see his »The ›German‹ Works of Alexander Agricola,« *Musical Quarterly* 46 (1960), pp. 56–66. However, Wegman expresses doubts about this in his *Grove* account of Agricola's biography (cf. fn. 5), and the matter remains uncertain.

[39] See *Das Augsburger Liederbuch. Faksimile-Ausgabe ... nach dem Exemplar Sign. CIM 43 (2° Cod. 142a) der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg*. Faksimile-Edition Augsburg 3 (Stuttgart, 1997), and the edn. by Luise Jonas, *Das Augsburger Liederbuch: die Musikhandschrift 2° Codex 142a der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg: Edition und Kommentar*. Berliner musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten 21, 2 vols. (Munich, 1983). Also, regarding the inserted fascicles, Martin Staehelin, »Möglichkeiten und praktische Anwendung der Verfasserbestimmung an anonym überlieferten Kompositionen der Josquin-Zeit,« *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 23 (1973), pp. 84–5.

[40] See *St. Galler Orgelbuch: Die Orgeltabulatur des Fridolin Sicher*. Schweizerische Musikdenkmäler 8, ed. Hans Joachim Marx, with Thomas Warburton (Winterthur, 1992); facs. edn. *The Songbook of Fridolin Sicher around 1515 (Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. Sang. 461)*, introd. David Fallows (Peer, 1996).

Now Formschneider's 1538 *Trium vocum carmina*, with which this article began, comes into relief. Given the quantity of its songs (exactly one hundred), their retrospective nature, and their mode of presentation, Formschneider's publisher was plainly mindful of the *Odhecaton*. It is appropriate at this juncture, then, to compare the Nuremberg preface with Petrucci's Venetian dedicatory letter by returning to the points made about the former at the outset. Firstly, the German emphasis on visual representation of music fits nicely with Petrucci's preoccupation with printing *per se* and with the beauty of the finished product. Formschneider's very name stands for craftsmanship (remember that he ›cut‹ for Albrecht Dürer!). Secondly, both publishers thought of the music so transmitted largely on its own terms: words, far from being objects for musical expression, had for Petrucci a political value, while for Formschneider's publisher (who does not even mention

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[41] On the copyist's identity see David Fallows, »The Copyist Formerly Known as Lucas Wagenrieder. Bernhard Rem and his Circle,« *Die Münchner Hofkapelle des 16. Jahrhunderts im europäischen Kontext. Bericht über das Symposium München ... 2004* (Munich, forthcoming) and Joshua Rifkin, »Jean Michel and ›Lucas Wagenrieder‹: Some New Findings,« *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 55 (2005), pp. 113–52, esp. pp. 144–52.

[42] See Nanie Bridgman, »Christian Egenolff, imprimeur de musique,« *Annales musicologiques* 3 (1955), pp. 77–177; Martin Staehelin, »Zum Egenolff-Diskantband der Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris,« *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 23 (1966), pp. 93–109. The latter also details the contents of D–HB, X.2.

[43] D–Z, 78,3; see Howard Mayer Brown, »Music for a Town Official in Sixteenth-Century Zwickau,« *Musica Antiqua Europae orientalis. Acta scientifica congressus* 7 (Bydgoszcz, 1985), pp. 479–92.

Nuremberg in his preface) they were potential distractions. Thirdly, titles and composers' names, for Petrucci, could serve to add to the international prestige value of his collections, a consideration with which Formschneider's publisher apparently had no concern. Finally, neither Petrucci nor Formschneider show the slightest interest in performance. All in all then, the explanation for textlessness proferred in Formschneider's 1538 print, while different from that implied by Petrucci in 1501, seems not so much out of line with it. On the contrary it projects a mode of thought with which Agricola himself might well have been familiar.

Textless transmission across Europe

Viewing the transmission of Agricola works from a Europe-wide perspective helps us to reach certain preliminary conclusions about the phenomenon of textlessness. Copies of works made in environments close in cultural and language terms to those of their origin tend to resemble the form in which their composers notated them in text presentation and more besides (in Agricola's case, French chansonniers from his own time, and some Flemish song collections). When such copies are made for use in a foreign environment words that do not travel may be systematically or partially suppressed. The number of extant Agricola sources in this category is small, but at the time the quantity of such materials carried or sent around Europe – more often than not in the form of sheets and fascicles – must have been enormous.[44] Such informal copies, we may surmise, could be with or without their original words according to perceived purpose at time of copying. As copies become more distant from their archetypes – in time or in terms of cultural and language separation – the perceived need for the original words weakens. Vernacular texts, in particular, may be dropped even within their own language areas (late French transmission of Agricola chansons). Beyond such areas they may sometimes still be copied, though generally in bowdlerized form (some Italian chansonniers), but are more often displaced by substitute words appropriate to local use, or simply jettisoned (several Italian sources, and virtually all the German ones).

While untexted pieces in the sources include some that surely must have been composed with instrumentalists chiefly in mind, and while, as we shall see, there is no doubt that some such players could and did play ›figured‹

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[44] Various contemporary documents refer to the dispatch by post of sheets containing individual musical works and their use in rehearsal; see, for example, the recently discovered Ambrogio Angeni letters discussed in Wilson, Heinrich Isaac (cf. fn. 21).

polyphonic music (especially from around 1480), the fact remains that there is little or no evidence to connect any of the sources that characteristically transmit songs without their words directly with instrumental performance, save in the case of dedicated intabulations. In the circumstances the instrumental assumption commonly advanced for untexted compositions in polyphonic sources (Italian or otherwise) does begin to look simplistic. And it sits unhappily with the view, alluded to above, that textless voices in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century polyphony both sacred and profane generally connote vocalization rather than instrumental performance. At least it seems inadequate as explanation for how Agricola and his contemporaries themselves perceived music, either in terms of sound and its notation, or of the multifarious purposes the surviving manuscripts and prints may have served.

In any event, alternative approaches are possible. In a recently published article I rehearse the thesis that, for Agricola and his contemporaries, words serve as point of departure for music that in both sound and notation is valued not so much as vehicle for their projection as *for its own intrinsic worth*.[45] They may leave their mark on the music – sometimes, indeed, with stunning expressive effect. However, there is no *a priori* rule that they have to, since they are not yet conceptualized as part of a work's *essence* as they would come to be within half a century of Agricola's death. Such approach to the ontology of the work vindicates not only the well-known casualness with which music scribes from Agricola's time (even those geographically and linguistically close to him) generally present words, but also the practice, especially prominent in sources more remote from their composers, of presenting certain kinds of song (vernacular especially, but not excluding song-like Latin devotional works) with their originally envisaged words set out only partially or not at all.

It also helps explain why there is no sign that Agricola and his contemporaries distinguished vocal from instrumental music either along repertorial lines or in terms of whether or not words are present. Adam von Fulda – in 1490 apparently one of the earliest writers to articulate a distinction of any kind – does little more than state the obvious when observing of »musica artificialis« (composed music, as opposed to improvised), »hoc genus tenent musici. Est vel instrumentalis vel vocalis. Instrumentalis est sonus per diversa instrumenta causatus, qui cum sit vocalis, tamen eius voces sunt materiales.« (»This kind of music is practised by musicians. It is either instrumental or vocal. Instrumental [music] is the sound caused by various instruments; although it has voices, yet its voices are material.«)[46] Adam, of course, is here dealing with »music« in the sense his readers would have expected: of its sounds. Yet he could scarcely have gone further to characterize musical »works« – a concept still in process of formulation – in terms of their innate vocality or instrumentality, even if it had occurred to him to do so. For the very possibility that words can be viewed as ancillary to the essential musical work casts doubt as to whether one can make any clear-cut distinction between music conceived wholly or partially for words and that conceived without.

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[45] Warwick Edwards, »Agricola and Intuitive Syllable Deployment,« *Early Music* 34 (2006), pp. 409–26.

II The performing traditions

Still, Adam von Fulda at least acknowledges a material distinction between voices and instruments. Moreover, from contemporary documentation it seems pretty clear that singers and instrumentalists tend to operate within performing traditions that are in many respects separate, even though they may share certain kinds of repertory. It is with the relationship to these traditions of Agricola's compositions as he himself conceived them that the rest of this essay is concerned. We shall need to consider first the performance of songs for which setting words seems to have formed a point of compositional departure, along with those built on pre-existent chants or other monophonic tunes that are readily identified with their own built-in words. We may then turn to songs that appear to have been constructed largely without reference to words at all.

Songs conceived with words

The exact extent of the former categories – his songs with words – cannot be identified with complete confidence. That is simply because many such songs survive only in wordless form – sometimes alongside songs originally without words that have picked up contrafact texts – in sources that were prepared in or for locations distant from the environment that produced the song in the first place. Nevertheless the canon can be reasonably well circumscribed by judicious reference to what appears in texted sources, to alternative sources of words indicated by text incipits or associated with known tune citations, and to pieces that, while wordless in the sources, show comparable characteristics of musical phrasing and articulation.

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[46] »Adami de Fulda Musica«, as printed in Martin Gerbert, *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra* (St. Blasien, 1784, Reprint Hildesheim, 1963), vol. 3, p. 333 (the original Strasbourg manuscript was burnt in 1870). My thanks again to Leofranc Holford-Strevens for the English translation.

We have already noted the likelihood that long-standing traditions of *a cappella* singing continue to characterize performances of vernacular song and Latin devotional music alike, at least in the immediate environments in which northern composers such as Agricola worked. Since such vocal traditions are apparently compatible with the presence of untexted voice-parts there seems little reason to doubt their applicability in cases where Agricola seems to have made only limited provision for words even in top parts. This is especially true of compositions entailing use of a pre-existent monophonic chant or popular tune. In the case of works that combine one text in a *cantus firmus* with a different (though generally related) one elsewhere in the counterpoint the musical scheme (and sometimes symbolic considerations) tends to undermine the music's responsiveness to the cyclic refrain structure demanded by the words and to dilute the extent to which words in top or other voices shape the melodic line. This tends to happen especially in Agricola's so-called chanson motets. »Belles sur toutes« / »Tota pulchra es«, for example (one of the six Agricola items to appear posthumously in the *Trium vocum carmina*), is transmitted in four earlier music sources, all relatively distant from Agricola, none of which transmit the French words.[47] However, a poetry source (F–Pn, fr. 1722) provides the ten-syllable rondeau quatrain likely to be the poem indicated by the incipit because of cross references to the words of Latin antiphon tenor. Here the French verses serve as symbolic accretions in a musical composition sprung from its pre-existent chant tenor, rather than as objects whose several syllables are to be ›set‹ in premeditated fixed positions.[48]

Where the words of a *cantus firmus* seem to be those for the song as a whole it may often be said that Agricola sets the tune rather than its words. A notable example among his Latin devotional compositions is his »Si dedero« (another one of the Formschneider six). Here the chant for a responsory verse is embellished in two of three voices in a manner that is compatible with long-standing *a cappella* performance traditions associated with polyphonic chant setting for liturgical purposes. At the same time

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[47] *Canti C* (1504), I–Fc, Basevi 2439, CH–SGs, 462, GB–Lbl, Add. 31922.

[48] Lerner in his transcription takes little or no account of the hemistich structure, and prints »seul« for »seulle« in line 3, leaving it a syllable short; I am grateful to Kate Maxwell for checking the text of the poem direct with its unique source.

Agricola's approach here to three-voice composition is in effect not only wordless but sufficiently idiosyncratic to have inspired a number of musical responses by his contemporaries whose titles simply refer to its opening two words, all of them capable of vocal or instrumental performance, notwithstanding the variable roles that words had to play in their conception.[49]

Much the same may be said of settings built around tunes of so-called ›popular‹ cast. In *In mijnen sin*, for example, Agricola's preoccupation with the tune is such that he seems to require its associated words to be adapted to the musical development as it unfolds, rather than the other way round.[50] Admittedly, some of his popular tune settings entail the kind of syllabic glove-fit that makes *a cappella* vocal performance seem inevitable (e. g. »Par ung jour de matinee«). But many do not. In the »Adieu m'amour« setting uniquely found in I–Fc, Basevi 2439,[51] for example, Agricola composes counter-melodies to the tune quoted in the tenor in ways that manifestly have little or no regard for word placement. Yet, as argued above, we cannot lightly set aside the possibility of all-vocal performance on that ground alone. Popular melodies, after all, seem to have flourished in the context of polyphony first of all in the combinative chanson repertories of Antoine Busnoys and – of special significance for Agricola – Ockeghem. Many such compositions are notable too for a loose relationship between words and the melodies to which their syllables are to be deployed. Yet that is no argument for the idea that they are necessarily instrumental. What copyists seem to imply in all these instances is that, at least within the cultural environments for which they are conceived, singers may employ words complete, selectively or not at all, according to perceived requirements of musical articulation.

What of performance traditions in which instruments participate alongside voices? Among the more telling instances of what seems to be a newly emerging trend towards instrumental participation in composed polyphony are those involving the German Augustin Schubinger. Having served as a trombonist with various German employers, including Friedrich III and Maximilian I, as well as in the civic ensemble of Florence, Schubinger was engaged as part of Philip the Fair's entourage in November 1500 just three months after Agricola had joined his chapel.[52] During the following year he is paid for playing cornetto at high mass in Mechelen (»Gegeven Meester Augustin van dat hy speeld ter hoo[g]missen«).[53] The same happens at Pentecost 1502 in Toledo when King Ferdinand's and Duke Philip's singers join to sing different parts of the Mass successively.[54] And again on Easter Day 1503, apparently at Lausanne, with the choirs of Savoy and Habsburg–Burgundy.[55] Finally, in September of that year Schubinger is presumably still among Philip's entourage when the *grande chapelle* joins with that of his father in Innsbruck to celebrate mass, although on this occasion it was the »sackbuts of the King [Maximilian, who] began the Gradual, and played for the Deo gratias and Ite misa est«.[56] Such practices in the performance of sacred music evidently spread in subsequent years, though it seems they were not reflected in notated musical sources until Girolamo Scotto's 1539 Venice publication of Nicolas Gombert's four-voice motets, in a set of parts designated apt for string and wind instruments (»Lyris maioribus, ac Tibijs imparibus accommodata«).[57]

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[49] See further the discussion, and music example showing comparative syllable deployments in the six texted sources, in my Agricola (cf. fn. 45), pp. 409–12. On the relationships between the several pieces with titles or text incipits beginning »Si« that Agricola's composition seems to have catalysed see Meconi, Sacred Tricinia (cf. fn. 15), pp. 173 onwards.

[50] Edwards, Agricola (cf. fn. 45), pp. 409–13.

[51] *Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia*. Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 22, ed. Edward R. Lerner, vol. 5*: Cantiones, Musica Instrumentalis, Opera dubia* (American Institute of Musicocogy, 1970), no. 26, pp. 44–5.

Meanwhile one assumes that the shift towards instrumental participation in composed polyphony began to manifest itself at around this time in vernacular song too. Again, the evidence is patchy, while documentation applicable to Agricola's immediate environment seems to be altogether lacking.[58] Among the earliest instances of such song notated expressly for voice and instrument together would appear to be the Petrucci Franciscus Bossinensis prints of 1509 and 1511, with their *frottola* arrangements for voice and lute, aimed at a market far removed from Agricola's world.[59]

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[52] Keith Polk, »The Schubingers of Augsburg: Innovation in Renaissance Instrumental Music,« *Quaestiones in musica: Festschrift für Franz Krautwurst*, ed. Friedhelm Brusniak and Horst Leuchtmann (Tutzing, 1989), pp. 495–503; Edmond Vander Straeten, *La musique au Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle*, vol. 7 (Brussels, 1885), p. 172.

[53] Polk, The Schubingers, ibid., p. 501, and Keith Polk, »Instrumental Music in Brussels in the Early 16th Century,« *Revue belge de musicologie* 55 (2001), pp. 93–4.

[54] Louis Prosper Gachard, *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, vol. 1: *Itinéraires de Philippe le Hardi, Jean Sans Peur* [etc.] (Brussels, 1876), p. 178, after the Burgundian court chronicler Antoine de Lalaing. As it happens, Agricola appears to be on leave of absence on this particular occasion (see Meconi, Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life, cf. fn. 9, p. 70).

[55] Gachard, Collection, ibid., p. 287, again after Lalaing whose reference to location is here ambiguous. See also Martin Picker, *The Chanson Albums of Marguerite of Austria: MSS 228 and 11239 of the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels* (Berkeley, 1965), p. 24, and Meconi, Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life (cf. fn. 9), p. 35, both citing Gachard but locating the event at »Villars-en-Bresse« (Villars les Dombes?) and Bourg-en-Bresse, respectively.

[56] Polk, Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 53), p. 94. Polk notes further instances from around 1500 of instrumentalists playing with choirs in sacred services – some more conclusive than others – in his »Instrumental Music in the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century,« *From Ciconia to Sweelinck. Donum natalicium Willem Elders*. Chloe 21, ed. Albert Clement and Eric Jas (Amsterdam, 1994), p. 29.

[57] RISM G 2977. See Richard Sherr, »Questions concerning Instrumental Ensemble Music in Sacred Contexts in the Early Sixteenth Century,« Le concert des voix (cf. fn. 29), pp. 149–50.

The performance of composed vernacular songs and Latin devotional music by solo instruments is demonstrable long before Agricola's time by the existence of tablatures, notably the Italian Faenza and German Buxheim manuscripts. As it happens no such Agricola sources survive from his lifetime, though, as noted above, several of his compositions appeared the year after his death in the 1507 Petrucci–Spinacino lute prints, and some years later in the Sicher keyboard manuscript and in the second of Hans Neusidler's two lute prints of 1536.[60]

Without doubt, instrumental ensembles too performed notated polyphony in Agricola's time. Keith Polk notes that »in such cities as Bruges, Kampen and Utrecht, accounts which describe [evening Lof] performances specify not only that the players performed ›motets‹, but, further that composed pieces (›gezette stucken‹) were involved.«[61] He also calls attention to a record of »the minstrels of the city of Brussels« performing in 1495 at the table of Philip the Fair »plusieurs chanssons de musicque«.[62] The link between such performance traditions and notated music becomes strikingly explicit in the case of two letters from the Venetian trombonist Giovanni Alvise Trombon to Francesco Gonzaga. The first, datable towards the end of December 1494, informs us that

> In questi zorni pasadi nui avemo posto zerti moteti innordine per sonar, dei quali do ne mando a la Signoria Vostra. Et l'uno de quei si è hopera de Hobert, zoè le quarto voze, do sovrani et uno tenor et uno contra alto; et perchè siamo sei li ò azonte do voxe base per sonar chon i tromboni che viene

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[58] See Wright, Voices (cf. fn. 8); Fallows, Specific Information (cf. fn. 8), pp. 131–44; Keith Polk, »Voices and Instruments: Soloists and Ensembles in the 15th Century,« *Early Music* 18 (1990), pp. 179–98.

[59] *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran in canto figurato per cantar e sonar col lauto Libro primo* [*secundo*] (Venice, 1509 and 1511), RISM 1509^3 and 1511.

[60] Hans Newsidler, *Ein newgeordent künstlich Lautenbuch* (Nuremberg, 1536), RISM 1536^{13}, part 2.

[61] Polk, Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 53), p. 100. The reference to »gezette stucken« is from a directive to the players of Kampen dated 1483; see Keith Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages: Player, Patrons and Performance Practice* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 122.

[62] Ibid., citing Georges Van Doorslaer, »La chapelle musicale de Philippe le Beau,« *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art* 4 (1934), p. 140.

> a esser a voxe sei et fa un bon aldir e chi'l volese sonar anche a zinque voxe, li ò fato anche un altro chontra baso da parte de quei do, dapoi vi mando. Anche un altro moteto »Dimandase Gabrielem«: è de hopera de Busnojs; zoè le quatro voxe et io li ò fato un altro contra baso che el soniamo a zinque, che in verità tuta Venezia non vol audir altro.[63]
>
> In these past days we have made instrumental arrangements of certain motets, of which I am sending two to your Lordship. One of these is a work of Obrecht, that is, in four voices, two sopranos, a tenor, and a »contra alto« [bassus]. And because we are six, I have added two bass parts to be played by trombones. This totals six parts and makes a good piece; and if one wants to play it in five parts, I have made another bass »contra alto« from these two. I am also sending you a further motet, »Dimandasse Gabrielem«; it is by Busnoys and is for four voices. I have done another bass »contra« because we play it in five [parts], and, to tell the truth, all Venice wants to hear nothing else.[64]

The second, dated 27 July 1505, conveys the following:

> Saverà la Signoria Vostra come in quell tenpo fossemo a Mantoa, el segnor Don Alfonso, ducha de Ferara, voleva invenir de oldir 4 tronboni et 2 cornetj, e mai ne ebe gratia per non aver le cosse aparechiate et ordenate et chi le abj sapute far, onde dapoi iunsij a Venetia mj misj al forte et ho trovato la vera via de quele et de più bele alter cosse et hole sperimentade tute; zoè tronbonj 4, cornetj 2, et poi tronbonj 4 e pifarj 4, et poj quell medemo moteto a fiautj 8, et più vj mando per sonar con tronboni 5 in una bota, et più mando uno pezo che se sona a zinque. Onde, trovandomi al prexente in leto amalado in suma nezesità et dubitando de la vita mia, ho voluto mandarlj a la Signoria Vostra aziò quelj restan in le mani vostre, zertificando la Signoria Vostra che né mj né altri à copia de tal cosse.[65]
>
> Your Lordship will know that, during the time we were in Mantua, Don Alfonso, duke of Ferrara, wanted to hear four trombones and two cornetti, and he was never able to do so because the pieces were not arranged [for this combination] and there was no one who knew how to make them. For this reason, when I returned to Venice, I put myself to the task and have found the way to do these and other beautiful things as well, and I have tried them all out: that is, four trombones and two cornetti, and also four trombones and four shawms, and also the same motet for eight recorders, and I am sending you a dialogue to play with five trombones, and also I am sending a piece that is played *a 5*. At present, I find myself sick in bed in great need and

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[63] William Prizer, »La cappella di Francesco II Gonzaga e la musica sacra a Mantova nel primo ventennio del Cinquecento,« *Mantova e i Gonzaga nella civiltà del rinascimento. Atti del convegno ... Mantova ... 1974* (Mantua, 1977), p. 274, citing Mantua, Archivio di Stato, B. 1435, fol. 574.

[64] Prizer, Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 29), p. 185.

[65] William Prizer, »Bernardino Piffaro e i pifferi e i tromboni di Mantova: strumenti a fiato in una corte italiana,« *Revista italiana di musicologia* 16 (1981), pp. 182–3, citing Mantua, Archivio di Stato, B. 1441, fol. 132.

> fear for my life, and so I wanted to send these [pieces] to your Lordship so that they would be in your hands, certifying to your Lordship that neither I nor anyone else has copies of such things.[66]

Admittedly these letters emanate from an environment different from that in which Agricola must have conceived most of his works. However, the earlier was written not long after Agricola's first recorded year-long foray into Italy (1491–2), and possibly contemporaneously with his second sojourn in Naples to which he returned in 1494 (it is not known when he left). And it is precisely during these periods that Agricola might well have fashioned his six-voice setting – uniquely transmitted in D–As, 2° 142a – of the originally three-voice Italian canzona »Fortuna desperata«, apparently in much the same spirit as Alvise had in mind.

Songs without words: 1. The freely-composed works

The link between instruments and composed polyphonic music conceived *with* words is incontrovertible in some of the documented instances discussed above. This might seem to vindicate the idea that, generally speaking, songs conceived *without* words are simply instrumental works. Implicit in this, however, is the assumption that such compositions are linked to a developing musical ›literacy‹ among instrumentalists. The supposed link is not without its problems, among them the manner in which collections of instrumental tablatures continue to focus overwhelmingly on arrangements, and the awkward fact, noted by Litterick, that putative »instrumental« music from Agricola's time seems to leave no lasting compositional legacy.[67]

Among the most discussed of Agricola's songs supposedly conceived without words is that generally known under the title *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* (»The blind man does not judge about colours«), though in fact it circulated with several different Latin texts or incipits. Agricola's authorship, while likely on stylistic grounds, is contradicted in two relatively early manuscripts, and indeed is indicated only in selected sources compiled after his death. Possibly the earliest source of all to transmit the work is a recently recognized *bifolium* with untitled and unascribed sections of the tenor and bassus of the *secunda pars*.[68] It is one of a series of fragments removed from the covers of journals of, and of books printed by, the Antwerp firm of Plantin-Moretus, and likely therefore to be of local origin.[69] With the antiphon incipit »Gaudent in celis« the work was copied, apparently in the early 1480s, into the earliest layer of Nicolaus Leopold's Innsbruck choirbook (D–Mbs, Mus. 3154).[70] By the end of the century it had also been copied into the possibly Silesian collection D–B, Mus. 40021,[71] and the *secunda pars* into Nikolaus Apel's choirbook (D–LEu, 1494),[72] in both instances drawing on the same text beginning »Regali quam decet«. Probably at much the same time it was copied into the Bohemian CZ–HK, II A 7 (*Speciálník*), now with an unlikely ascription to Isaac, and with words beginning »Ave ancilla trinitatis«. At around the turn of the century it appears in the *Segovia Manuscript*, apparently copied in Spain by a Flemish-speaking scribe, with superius and contratenor bearing the incipit *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* (as above), and tenor *Cecus non judicat de valoribus* (»The blind man does not judge about [?notated musical] values«). The whole piece is headed – in the space usually allotted in this source to composer ascriptions – »Ferdinandus et frater ejus«. At about the same time it was copied anonymously, and with the heading *Cecus*, into the Florentine manuscript I–Bc, Q 17. At some point between February 1512 and August 1514 Johannes Heer, a Paris-trained clergyman in Glarus, Switzerland, copied it into his songbook (now CH–SGs, 462) without title, but with ascription to »Alexander«.[73] And during the period *c.*1512–21 Swiss organist and composer Fridolin Sicher copied it into his keyboard book (CH–SGs, 530) with the title *Diva parens*. Finally it appeared in two Nuremberg prints: set for lute without title, but with ascription to Alexander Agricola, in Neusidler's *Der ander theil des Lautenbuchs* (1536), and anonymously in Formschneider's *Trium vocum carmina* (1538), but with handwritten title *Cecorum* and ascription to Alexander Agricola added by the owner of the Jena copy.[74]

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[66] Prizer, Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 29), pp. 185–6.

[67] Litterick, On Italian Instrumental Ensemble Music (cf. fn. 19), pp. 128–30. See also Carl F. Jickeli, *Textlose Kompositionen um 1500*. Europäische Hochschulschriften 36.119 (Frankfurt/M., 1994), p. 186 (»Die textlosen Sätze um 1500 können demnach nicht als frühe ›instrumentale‹ Kompositionen aufgefaßt werden, sie stellen vielmehr die Spätstufe einer langen Tradition dar«).

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[68] B–Amp, M 6, fol. 7, reproduced in *Anthologie van muziekfragmenten uit de Lage Landen (middeleeuwen – renaissance). Polyfonie, monodie en leisteenfragmenten in facsimile*, ed. Eugeen Schreurs (Peer, 1995), pp. 68–9, the *Cecus* fragment on fol. 7b^r being identified subsequently by David Fallows and quoted in Jacobijn Kiel, »The Antwerp Fragments M 6,« *Music Fragments and Manuscripts in the Low Countries*. Yearbook of the Alamire Foundation 2 (Peer, 1997), pp. 45–51.

[69] Jaap van Benthem, »The Alamire Fragments of the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp,« *Musicology and Archival Research. Colloquium Proceedings Brussels ... 1993*. Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique 46, ed. Barbara Haggh, Frank Daelemans and André Vanrie (Brussels, 1994), pp. 542–57.

[70] Edited in *Der Kodex des Magister Nicolaus Leopold, Erster Teil*. Das Erbe deutscher Musik 80, ed. Thomas L. Noblitt (Kassel, 1987), no. 51, pp. 241–9. On copying dates for this section of the manuscript see Rifkin, Munich, Milan (cf. fn. 25), pp. 284–307.

[71] Edited in *Der Kodex Berlin 40021, Erster Teil*. Das Erbe deutscher Musik 76, ed. Martin Just (Kassel, 1990), no. 17, pp. 141–8.

[72] Edited in *Der Mensuralkodex des Nikolaus Apel, Zweiter Teil*. Das Erbe deutscher Musik 33, ed. Rudolf Gerber (Kassel, 1960), no. 124, pp. 225–7.

[73] For an edition of the manuscript and discussion of its copyist see *Das Liederbuch des Johannes Heer von Glarus. Ein Musikheft aus der Zeit des Humanismus (Codex 462 der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen)*. Schweizerische Musikdenkmäler 5, ed. Arnold Geering (Basel,

Reinhard Strohm proposed that the *Segovia Manuscript*'s »Ferdinandus and his brother« were the blind Jehan and Charles Fernandes of Bruges who held appointments in the teaching of letters at the University of Paris from at least 1478; as organist at St Donatian's (Bruges) briefly in 1482; as instrumentalists in Charles VIII's household in 1488 and 1490; and who were surely the blind violist brothers »Johannes and Carolus« whose music Tinctoris reported hearing in Bruges in the following well-known passage from the *De inventione et usu musice* (c. 1482–4?):[75]

> Neque preterire in animum venit: quod exiguo tempore lapso: duos fratres Orbos natione Flamingos: viros quidem non minus litteris eruditos quam in cantibus expertos: quorum uni Carolus: alteri Johannes nomina sunt. Brugis audiverim: illum supremam partem et hunc tenorem plurium cantilenarum: tam perite: tamque venuste hujusmodi viola consonantes: ut in ulla nunquam melodia: me profecto magis oblectaverim. Et quia rebecum (si sonitor artifex et expertus fuerit) modulos illis quam simillimos emittat: quibuslibet affectus spiritus mei (occulta quadam familiaritate) ad leticiam quam simillime excitantur. Hec itaque duo instrumenta mea sunt. mea inquam: hoc est quibus inter cetera: animus meus ad affectum pietatis assurgit: quaeque ad contemplationem gaudiorum supernorum: ardentissime cor meum inflammant. Quo mallem ea potius ad res sacras: et secreta animi solamina semper reservari: quam ad res prophanas et publica festa interdum applicari.
>
> Nor does it come to mind to pass over the fact that, a little while ago, I heard two blind brothers, both Flemings, at Bruges, one of whom is called Charles

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1967); facs. edn. as *Das Liederbuch des Johannes Herr von Glarus*. Faksimile-Edition Rara 7 (Stuttgart, 1998).

[74] Howard Mayer Brown (*Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600: A Bibliography*, rev. reprint, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, pp. 59–62) reads »Cecox«, and implies a similar handwritten identification in the Berlin copy which I have not seen.

[75] Strohm, Music (cf. fn. 12), pp. 32, 88, 143. Paula Higgins subsequently noted, from Burgundian court records of payments to them in 1468 and 1470, that the blind Jehan Fernandes who, along with Jean Cordoval, impressed Martin Le Franc by his instrumental skills in the 1430s and remained at the Burgundian court until the 1450s, was their father (review of Strohm, Music, cf. fn. 12, in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42, 1989, p. 159). See further André Pirro, »L'Enseignement de la musique aux universités françaises,« *Acta musicologica* 2 (1930), p. 46; Hiroyuki Minamino, »Johannes and Carolus Fernandez, Fifteenth-Century Composers of Music for Lute,« *The Lute* 37 (1997), pp. 5–8.

> and the other John, men who are to be sure no less scholarly in Latin letters than proficient in music, the former playing the superius and the latter the tenor of many songs, harmonizing them together as skilfully and as beautifully on a *viola* of this kind, so that indeed I have never delighted more in any music. And because the rebec (if the player be a craftsman and proficient) can produce melodies as similar as possible to those [of the *viola*], with any [melodies] my emotions are aroused, [by the rebec], through a mysterious inner kinship, to as similar a delight as possible. Accordingly these two instruments are mine, mine I say, that is to say that through these, among other things, my mind rises to a feeling of devotion, and which most ardently inflame my heart to the contemplation of heavenly joys. For this reason I would rather have them be reserved always for sacred matters, and for private solace of the mind, than sometimes used for secular matters and public festivities.[76]

As others have pointed out, this passage comes from an account of performance media – voices and instruments alike – supposed to have evolved from antiquity.[77] Its immediate context is an evaluation of stringed instruments, Tinctoris's chief point being the potential of the *viola* – and in the hands of the right musicians even the rebec – to produce sounds worthy of the status commonly attached to that of voices in the singing of sacred music. Indeed, having established the theorist's dependence on Augustine's *Confessions* in the formulation of his argument, Christopher Page wonders

> whether Tinctoris's quotations from that book in the *De inventione et usu musice* give any special resonance to a note of anxiety that he sounds about the pleasure, both aesthetic and intellectual, that he enjoyed when he heard the two string players in Bruges play secular pieces. Tinctoris's wish that the *viola* and *rebec*, which so ravished him on that occasion, be reserved »for sacred matters and for private solace« and not used »for secular matters and public festivities« amounts to a censure of the very occasion which so delighted him.[78]

Exactly what Tinctoris heard the Fernandes brothers play is unknowable. Nor indeed can it be determined when his encounter took place or when he wrote about it.[79] Still, it is not hard to imagine »Cecus« acquiring its aphoristic title by virtue of the assimilation of its top and tenor voices into the brothers' repertory at some stage.[80] Strohm believed so, but took the work to have originated as a motet, »Gaudent in celis«.[81] Most, however, regard it as of instrumental conception on account of its prominent »sequential and motivic patterning, passage-work, pedal-points, and ostinatos«.[82] Polk, viewing *Cecus* as the (partly improvised?) work of »Johannes and Carolus Fernandes [or Alexander Agricola]« (his brackets) saw such features as indications of how »players may have created free sections spontaneously«.[83] However, as most commentators admit (myself included), such devices are just as often encountered in vocal music, especially masses and motets.[84] Moreover it is far from self-evident that they epitomize improvisation practices.[85] Given what we know of the Fernandes' careers, it is more likely that they represent something of an intellectual approach to making music, imbued in some respects with reminiscences of the classroom. Dietrich Kämper, noting the pedagogic overtones of »coloribus« and »valoribus« in the *Segovia Manuscript* ascriptions, called attention to the use in the tenor of the hexachord scale in successively expanding form in a manner redolent of what every singer of polyphony had to learn.[86] As motet *cantus firmus* the device was also used, perhaps contemporaneously, by Isaac (»O decus ecclesie«), and later by Josquin (»Ut Phebe radiis«). The idea of organic expansion had also been applied in more supple and interesting ways to other kinds of motif in vocal compositions by Busnoys, and would be exploited with particular effect by Obrecht, as Wegman showed.[87]

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[76] Transcription and translation from Christopher Page, »Reading and Reminiscence: Tinctoris on the Beauty of Music,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996), p. 11.

[77] Anthony Baines, »Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's ›De Inventione et Usu Musicae‹,« *Galpin Society Journal* 3 (1950), p. 19.

[78] Page, Reading (cf. fn. 76), p. 30.

[79] Tinctoris, it seems, may well have interrupted his residence at the Naples court between the early 1470s and ?1487 with one or more trips abroad. However, I can find no basis for Strohm's dating of his Bruges experience to 1482 (Strohm, Music, cf. fn. 12, p. 143) or »probably in 1482« (Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music, 1380–1500*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 366). I am grateful to Ronald Woodley for advice on the uncertain state of our knowledge about Tinctoris's travels.

All this tends to confirm that the vocal–instrumental dichotomy, lying outside the conceptual framework of the period, is a false one. Seen in that light the Segovia ascription to the Fernandes brothers might signify not so much the composers of a completed ›instrumental work‹ as the exponents of a performance process whose distinctiveness transcends that of any putative instrumental-vocal divide. It is easy to imagine a young and receptive Agricola susceptible to a sense of play observing the techniques the blind instrumentalists deployed to sustain their performances and turning them to fertile use in what, regardless of performing medium, amounts to a veritable compendium of devices the Fernandes famously used to sustain their improvisations.

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[80] On related expressions in Aristotle and in the thirteenth century see Page, Reading (cf. fn. 76), p. 12.

[81] Strohm, The Rise (cf. fn. 79), p. 366.

[82] Howard Mayer Brown and Keith Polk, »Instrumental music, c. 1300 – c. 1520,« *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages*. The New Oxford History of Music 3.1, ed. Reinhard Strohm and Bonnie J. Blackburn (Oxford, 2001), p. 130. Of course it is possible that the title »Gaudent in celis« (»They rejoice in heaven«) in D–Mbs, Mus. 3154 was also intended as an aphorism, rather than as incipit for an antiphon text.

[83] Polk, German Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 61), pp. 155–7.

[84] See, for example, Brown and Polk, Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 82), p. 130; as well as my »Songs Without Words by Josquin and his Contemporaries,« in Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (cf. fn. 19), p. 81.

[85] See Litterick's cautionary note in On Italian Instrumental Ensemble Music (cf. fn. 19), p. 129.

[86] Dietrich Kämper, »Instrumentale Stilelemente bei Alexander Agricola,« *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 28 (1978), p. 10.

[87] Wegman, Born (cf. fn. 12), pp. 179–81.

A similar context may be applicable to some further Agricola compositions that lack *cantus firmi* and sound like ›songs without words‹, yet cannot with confidence be identified with any particular long-standing instrumental performance tradition. *Pater meus agricola est*, with its punning allusion to Agricola's none too illustrious father,[88] was far less well circulated than *Cecus*,[89] but shares with it some of its constructivist devices (the »expanding hexachord« included). With its enigmatic Latin title and cryptic self-generated tenor, the *Ut heremita solus* in Petrucci's *Motetti C* (Venice, 1504), RISM 1504^1, and Hermann Finck's *Practica musica* (Wittenberg, 1556) might be another such work, if Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl is right in proposing it as an Agricola composition, linked in some way with Ockeghem, as the poet Guillaume Crétin implies.[90] By comparison with these, *Oblier veult douleur et tristesse* (another *Trium vocum carminum* item) was quite well circulated, though never with any more words than that, even in the otherwise fully texted collection of six chansons in the French manuscript F–Pn, fr. 1596 of c. 1500.[91] One wonders if this incipit too is an aphorism. The work does not sound like a chanson. Some kind of pre-existent musical material seems to be present. Could the latter half feature a pair of solmization mottoes? *La sol la fa mi*, and *Fa mi sol sol la* or *Fa mi sol la* – the latter standing for »Agricola«?

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[88] Rob C. Wegman, » ›Pater meus agricola est‹: The Early Years of Alexander Agricola,« *Early Music* 34 (2006), pp. 375–89.

[89] The work is known only through Petrucci's *Motetti libro quarto* (Venice, 1505), RISM 1505^2, and Sebald Heyden's, *De arte canendi* (Nuremberg, 1540).

[90] Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, »Ockeghem's motets: Style as an Indicator of Authorship: The Case of ›Ut heremita solus‹ Reconsidered", *Johannes Ockeghem: Actes du XLe Colloque International d'Études Humanistes, Tours … 1997,* ed. Philippe Vendrix (Paris, 1998), pp. 499–520.

[91] On this manuscript see Richard Wexler, »Music and Poetry in Renaissance Cognac,« *Le Moyen français* 5 (1979), pp. 102–14.

Songs without words: 2. Settings of wordless tenors

If in the ›freely-composed‹ songs without words Agricola draws on selected *techniques* characteristic of notationless improvised instrumental performance tradition, in those built on wordless tenors he engages with the underlying *processes* that characterize such performances. Singers and instrumentalists alike in his time commonly made polyphony by improvising »discants« and »contratenors« around pre-set melodies sung or played by a »tenorista«.[92] The practice is plainly implied in notated musical sources that present only tenors. Of these, best known are two closely interrelated dance manuals, the late-fifteenth-century Burgundian *basse-danse* manuscript, B–Br, 9085, and Michel de Toulouze's print entitled *L'art et instruction de bien dancer* (Paris, [1496 or earlier]). Mostly comprising undifferentiated breves, the tenors in these dance books are carefully set out to supply the correct number of notes and »measures« for each individual choreography (*Beaulté*, for example, the first tenor in the manuscript collection, and the 26th in the print, is designated in both sources »a xxxix notes a. iiii. mesures«). From the colophon in the print it is clear that they are to be played by instrumentalists: »Avecques celles regles [de dancer] sont notes pour Jouer a tous Instrumens nouvellement imprimees«.[93]

Much has been written about the bands, both *haut* and *bas*, that played such music, and the manner in which they improvised counterpoints on pre-existent tenors.[94] But such instrumental ensembles surely played more than just dance music. Many of the tenors in these, and other sources of similar repertory, derive from, or are otherwise related to, individual voice parts in notated polyphonic songs. Several fifteenth-century sources transmit collections of tenors drawn straight from such compositions. In one instance – F–Pn, n. a. fr. 4379-III (fols. 61–8) – we may be dealing simply with a partbook whose companion parts are no longer extant.[95] At least its tenors all seem to be notated in much the same way as might be expected had they been set out more conventionally on the same opening as their companion voices. In particular, refrain texts are pre-inscribed below the staves whenever the musical articulation of the tenor seems designed for them, but are otherwise absent. In other sources, however, tenors that derive, or seem likely to derive from written polyphony are notated in a manner suggestive of use in group improvisation. Cases in point include the several musical items Noël de Fleurus and later his son Jean de Fleurus dit Taillefer (and others) jotted down at various times between the 1420s and 1470s on the back of deeds and other official records for the town of Namur in the Brabant.[96] Here the music is in a simple stroke notation, representing rhythmically simplified versions of mensural melodies, such as might be useful to musicians accustomed to notationless performance for whom a training in complexities of polyphonic mensural music notation would have served little purpose.[97]

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[92] On the role of a tenorista as linchpin in the direction of polyphony, both composed and extemporized, see Rob C. Wegman, »From Maker to Composer: Improvisation and Musical Authorship in the Low Countries, 1450–1500,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996), esp. pp. 444–9.

[93] For facsimiles of the two sources see *Le manuscrit dit des Basses danses de la Bibliothèque de Bourgogne*, ed. Ernest Closson (Brussels, 1912, Reprint Geneva, 1976); *Les basses danses de Margueite d'Autriche. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift MS 9085 aus dem Besitz der Bibliothèque Royale Albert I., Bruxelles*, 2 vols. (Graz, 1988); *L'art et instruction de bien dancer*, ed. Victor Scholderer (London, 1936); and *S'ensuit l'art et instruction de bien dancer* (Geneva, 1985). For a collated modern edn. see *Fifteenth Century Basse Dances*. The Wellesly Edition 6, ed. James L. Jackman (Wellesley, 1964, Reprint New York 1980). For further information see Frederick Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth Century Basse Danse* (New York, 1968), and Raymond Meylan, *L'énigme de la musique des basses danses du quinzième siècle* (Berne, 1968).

[94] Notably by Keith Polk; see the information conveniently gathered together in his German Instrumental Music (cf. fn. 61).

Again, there is little if anything about the Namur tenors to suggest a rigid distinction between vocal and instrumental use. Instrumentalists could have adopted any of them as basis for polyphonic improvisation. But many are accompanied by the texts for which the untransmitted discantus voices had been fashioned, and in some instances texts appear without any notated music at all. In the circumstances there is the possibility, even likelihood, that they served for extempore vernacular singing too. This is hardly surprising. After all, such theoretical information as we have concerning improvising *super librum*, to say nothing of anecdotal evidence, largely relates to vocal practices.[98]

With some stroke notations, however, instrumental performance seems the only realistic possibility. One series of examples comprises the lower voices of John Dunstaple's »Puisque m'amour«, various duets on them, and four other tenors, all jotted down in the 1440s in a book belonging to Venetian trombonist Zorzi Trombetta, apparently for use by a ship's musician.[99] Then there is *Quene note*, one of three tenors noted in the third quarter of the fifteenth century on a page from a book of calendars and astronomical tables, to which some one has added a discant in ordinary mensural notation that, as often remarked, any instrumentalist could have improvised.[100]

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[95] David Fallows, »The Early History of the Tenorlied and its Ensembles,« Le concert des voix (cf. fn. 29), p. 203. I am grateful to David Fallows for letting me see his photocopies of the manuscript.

[96] B–NA. They are edited, with facsimiles, in Ernest Montellier, »Quatorze Chansons du XVe siècle extraites des Archives Namuroises,« *Commission de la Vieille Chanson populaire, Annuaire 1939* (Antwerp, 1939), pp. 153–213.

[97] On sources with stroke notation see Jan van Biezen and Kees Vellekoop, »Aspects of Stroke Notation in the Gruuthuse Manuscript and Other Sources,« *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 34 (1984), pp. 3–25.

[98] See, for example, the extensive citations in Wegman, From Maker (cf. fn. 92).

An initially unnotated tradition of making counterpoints on tenors drawn from pre-existent polyphonic songs is surely a major impetus for the creation of a body of fully notated such settings that can be identified in musical sources from the 1440s, and to which Agricola contributed more extensively than any other composer of his time. Tinctoris described the compositional technique in the *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (dated 1477 in one contemporary copy):[101]

> Super cantum autem figuratum contrapunctus fit quotiens tenore ex notis certi valoris iuxta perfectas aut imperfectas quantitates mensuratis composito super cum concinitur.
>
> Counterpoint, however, is made on figured song, whenever, with a tenor made up of notes of a certain value, measured in terms of perfect or imperfect quantities, harmony is made over this.

His accompanying music examples, with their tenors drawn from Latin polyphony [102] and mensural chant, represent texted vocal traditions. Agricola's settings of comparable vernacular *cantus figuratus* tenors include one – »Allez regretz« – that may be similarly conceived for words (those of

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[99] GB–Lbl, Cotton Titus A.xxvi. See Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, »Il libro di appunti di un suonatore di tromba del quindicesimo secolo,« *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 16 (1981), pp. 16–39.

[100] GB–Ob, Digby 167, fol. 31^{v}; facs. in *Early Bodleian Music: Sacred & Secular Songs Together with other Ms Compositions in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, ed. Sir John Stainer (London, 1901), vol. 1, pl. 98. The other two stroke-notation tenors are those of the three-voice song »Aux ce bon joure de la bonestren« (complete, though without words, in *Trent 87*, I–TRbc, 1374, fols. 117^{v}–118^{r}) and of the hymn faburden »Eterne rex altissime«.

[101] See *Johannis Tinctoris Opera theoretica*. Corpus Scriptorum de Musica 22, ed. Albert Seay (American Institute of Musicology, 1975), vol. 2, chapter 22, pp. 117–21, quotation from p. 117; translation by A. Seay in Johannes Tinctoris, *The art of Counterpoint. Liber de arte contrapuncti*. Musicological studies and documents 5 (American Institute of Musicology, 1961), pp. 110–12, quotation from p. 110.

[102] The example in question bears text from the Sanctus in the *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, but in another copy of it in I–Bc, A71 it has the incipit »Si vis«, while in two further copies in I–PEc, 1013 it has no text at all.

Hayne's original chanson? or just possibly those indicated in one source – I–Rvat, C. G. XIII.27 – by the Spanish incipit »No me canteys a la primera«). However, the others, being surely wordless in conception, and saturated with the kinds of device we can associate readily with group improvisation, seem self-evidently destined from the start for instrumental performance (the occasional incidence of *contrafactum* texts notwithstanding).[103]

Agricola probably made such wordless *cantus figuratus* settings throughout his working life. In all save two cases he accepts the original tenor as his own tenor unchanged, just as, one assumes, improvising bands did. This contrasts with his procedure when using material drawn from pre-existent polyphony in the mass settings (*Missa Je ne demande*, *Missa Le serviteur*, *Missa Malheur me bat*), where the *cantus firmus* treatment tends to be much more flexible. The former relates to a polyphonic tradition that is improvised *in* performance; the latter one of composed polyphony *for* performance. His two-voice setting of the tenor of Binchois's rondeau »Comme femme« (found only in the *Segovia Manuscript*) sounds close to putative spontaneous improvisation, and might be relatively early on that account (notwithstanding the didactic function that characterizes much two-voice composition, making it difficult to be confident about dating). His two further *Comme femme* settings – one *a 3* and one *a 4* – must have been completed by the end of the 1480s, to judge from their earliest sources.[104] So too must at least one of the five settings of the tenor of Hayne's rondeau »De tous biens plaine«.[105] Perhaps also by the same date, although their earliest transmission is from around the turn of the century, are *Amours amours*, *De*

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[103] In my Songs Without Words (cf. fn. 84) I used the expression »res facta« to characterize the tenors for such settings. Strictly speaking, this is correct, but because its meanings are rather specific (see Margaret Bent, »›Resfacta‹ and ›Cantare Super Librum‹,« *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36, 1983, pp. 371–91, and Bonnie J. Blackburn, »On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century«, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40, 1987, pp. 210–84), and not so easily explained, I now prefer Tinctoris's much more readily grasped »cantus figuratus«. Admittedly the expression Honey Meconi coins for the title of her useful essay on this genre – »Art-Song Reworkings: An Overview,« *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 119 (1994), pp. 1–42 – also has its merits (rehearsed at the beginning of the article), though the built-in anachronism can be hard to take.

[104] With Latin Marian contrafact texts both *Comme femme* settings appear in Gathering XII of D–B, Mus. 40021 (1493–4/5); the three-voice setting, apart from turning up eventually among the *Trium vocum carmina* Agricola compositions, is also in I–Rc, 2856, on whose uncertain date see above.

[105] Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 51), no. 52, pp. 78–9; it is in I–Rvat, C. G. 27 (dated 1492–4).

tous biens plaine (the two settings in the *Segovia Manuscript*),[106] *D'ung aultre amer a 3* (the Segovia setting),[107] *Tout a par moy a 4*,[108] and *T'Andernaken*.[109]

The last mentioned, however, differs from the others by presenting, in much embellished form, an older tenor whose title indicates an association of some kind with a set of narrative Flemish verses far removed in their quasi-popular caste from the world of French courtly rondeaus. This tenor does not itself behave like a word-bearing popular melody though. It has, in fact, all the characteristics one might expect of a wordless tenor in a polyphonic song with word-bearing discantus.[110] Indeed, the original song in question might well have been that uniquely transmitted in the 1440s manuscript *Trent 87* (I–TRbc, 1374) with ascription to one Tyling (or perhaps »tijling« or »tyting«), for although it is untexted in this source its discantus readily accepts the »T'Andernaken« popular verses, as Jan Willem Bonda showed.[111]

Six settings are transmitted only in posthumous sources (I–Fc, Basevi 2439 included): *De tous biens plaine* (two further settings *a 3*),[112] *D'ung aultre amer* (one setting *a 3* – with tenor from Ockeghem's discantus, rather than his tenor, and treated with even more liberties than was the case with the *T'Andernaken* tenor – and two settings *a 4*),[113] and *Tout a par moy a 3*.

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[106] Ibid., nos. 55–6, pp. 82–4.

[107] Ibid., no. 60, pp. 88–9.

[108] Ibid., no. 63, pp. 92–5.

[109] Ibid., no. 67, pp. 99–101.

[110] Compare the tenor *La belle se siet*, inscribed in stroke notation in the Namur documents cited above, along with popular French narrative verses it can scarcely have been designed to bear. It surely originated as an integral part of the anonymous two-voice setting found in I–Bu, 2216 whose discantus is plainly crafted for the same words that appear with it there. For full details of early transmission – including Guillaume Dufay's adaptation with added triplum – and subsequent citations see David Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs 1415–1480* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 228–9.

[111] Jan Willem Bonda, »T'Andernaken between Bruges and Ferrara,« From Ciconia (cf. fn. 56), pp. 49–74. Bonda saw the *T'Andernaken* tenor as »meant for the improvisation of a Discant above it« (p. 50), a view that cannot be ruled out. However, I find it much harder to accept his line of reasoning that for subsequent native Dutch speakers like Agricola, familiar with the »T'Andernaken« verses, the act of composing a polyphonic setting of their associated tenor for anything other than voices would have been inconceivable, or to follow the argument that led him to conclude that for Agricola's setting, »vocal performance may be difficult but it seems the only way in which this complex composition could make sense … In listening to it one needs the information of the text to structure the music … The only way to appreciate an instrumental version … is by realizing that it was originally intended for vocal performance« (pp. 66–7).

[112] Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 51), nos. 53–4, pp. 79–82.

[113] Ibid., nos. 57–9, pp. 85–8.

And while late transmission does not in itself rule out an early date of composition, there is perhaps something about their expansiveness and confidence to suggest that they are indeed from his last years.

If we can be reasonably confident of an initially instrumental destination for most of Agricola's *cantus figuratus* settings we may as well speculate about some of the particular instrumentalists he might have had in mind for them at different stages in his career. To judge from documentary and iconographical evidence, in conjunction with the musical sources referred to above, there was no shortage on the Franco-Burgundian axis of instrumentalists whose skills at improvising on a tenor might be harnessed to this end. Among them in the 1480s were surely Charles and Jehan Fernandes, already alluded to in connection with *Cecus*, given their documented service with Charles VIII in at least 1488 and 1490, by which time Agricola was almost certainly a colleague.[114] The presence of six settings in the Agricola canon that could have been composed during his final years in Philip the Fair's *grande chapelle*, opens up the intriguing possibility that Agricola composed them with Augustin Schubinger, and other instrumentalists in Philip's entourage at that time, specifically in mind. We noted above Schubinger's occasional participation as cornettist with the *chapelle*.[115] That he also played the lute at this time is documented in a 1504 court record of payment for his services in Spain.[116]

Of course the question arises as to whether Agricola himself took part in instrumental performances of his own compositions. That would seem highly likely, his assumed primary activity as singer notwithstanding, although the only evidence that he played as well as sang is the rather tenuous statement in the much later musical *Epitaphion Alexandri Agricolae Symphonistae regis Castiliae Philippi* that he was »clarus vocum manuumque«.[117]

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[114] On the Fernandes' royal service see Pirro, L'Enseignement (cf. fn. 75), p. 46, citing F–Pn, fr. 32779, fols. 384^r and 392^v, copied in the eighteenth century from early records now untraced.

[115] Schubinger is documented at the Burgundian court from November 1500 to at least October 1503; see Polk, The Schubingers (cf. fn. 52).

[116] Vander Straeten, La musique (cf. fn. 52), p. 149.

[117] Uniquely transmitted in Rhau's above-mentioned *Symphoniae iucundae* (1538), and discussed most recently in Tess Knighton, » ›Music, why do you weep?‹ A Lament for Alexander Agricola (d. 1506),« *Early Music* 34 (2006), pp. 427–41. Kämper's statement (in Instrumentale Stilelemente, cf. fn. 86, p. 2), occasionally repeated, that Agricola was a lutenist has no secure foundation. It comes about from taking the words »Alexandre Agricola, chantre de nostre chappelle, et ung bon joueur de luz«, in Charles VIII's letter to Piero de' Medici requesting the composer's return to France, out of context (see Martin Picker, »A Letter of Charles VIII of France Concerning Alexander Agricola,«

The Italian fallacy

The view of Agricola's wordless *cantus figuratus* settings, and possibly his other instrument-orientated compositions, as product of lifelong activity compels a reconsideration of the received view (quoted above) that compositions for instrumental ensemble in Italian sources represent »the chief focus of secular composition by Franco-Netherlanders in Italy«. This is something I too once took for granted.[118] However, with Josquin's first documented presence in Italy now set back from 1459 to 1484, a year before Isaac's arrival, perhaps when both composers were at least thirty – and with Agricola's Florentine residence of the 1470s now disproved and his known visits confined to 1491–2, and a sojourn of unknown length beginning in 1494, the case for identifying a school of instrumental composition attributable to »northerners active at Italian courts« begins to look pretty thin.

Even those foreign composers known to have been in Italy much earlier do not necessarily bolster it. Johannes Martini's most famed ›song without words‹, *La Martinella*, was copied without title into *Trent 89* (I–TRbc, 1376) long before he took up permanent residence at the Ferrarese court in 1473. Admittedly it is distinctly possible that the piece was entered into the virtually completed manuscript in 1466, in which year Martini may well have visited the court in the company of one of its former employees, Nicolaus Krombsdorfer, now organist and principal singer to Duke Sigismund of Austria. However, Martini's main activity at this time was surely somewhere north of the Alps.[119]

This raises the very real possibility that the major part of his other compositions transmitted without words in Italian sources – many of them rondeau-like, and/or with French titles – may indeed have begun life as conventional chansons, complete with words.[120] What characterizes the

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Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese, ed. Jan LaRue, New York, 1966, p. 665–72, and Plate 23a). The lute player is not Agricola, but is in his company (»en sa compaignie«). Moreover Charles requires that Agricola not only comes before him but that he brings with him the said lutenist (»qu'il s'en vienne devers nous et qu'il amene avec luy ledit joueur de luz«).

[118] Songs Without Words (cf. fn. 84), p. 91. See also Meconi, Art-Song Reworkings (cf. fn. 103), pp. 21–2.

[119] See Reinhard Strohm, »Die vierstimmige Bearbeitung (um 1465) eines unbekannten Liedes von Oswald von Wolkenstein,« in: *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft* 4 (1986/87), p. 171; ibid., The Rise (cf. fn. 79), p. 521.

[120] Reinhard Strohm, citing my Songs Without Words (cf. fn. 84), p. 80, graciously endorsed the listing there of the principal Franco-Netherlanders to produce the subjects of my study (The Rise, cf. fn. 79, pp. 535–6), but called me to account for omitting the name of Martini. I am unrepentant!

contents of late fifteenth-century Italian chansonniers is their concentration – often obsessively – on compositions by foreigners, irrespective of where they lived. Most of Martini's secular music, in fact, circulated little beyond the Ferrarese manuscript Rome 2856 and the Florentine *Braccesi chansonnier* I–Fn, B. R. 229. (Did his long residence at Ferrara, and the Italianate form of name he adopted, even serve to inhibit the collectability of his music?) Busnoys, on the other hand, never went to Italy, as far as we know, yet his music seems to turn up everywhere.

Indeed, that is not the only irony to flow from the current widely held view of Italy as crucible for the composition and performance of instrumental ensemble music in Agricola's time, and hence the implied marginalization of France in this regard. After all, the only extant musical source from Agricola's time to have emerged from this study as unequivocally designated for instrumental performance has turned out to be the Michel de Toulouze dance manual – printed in Paris.

III »Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus«

In conclusion – and in deference to the title of this volume – I have to say that to Agricola and his contemporaries the idea that music (whether ›composed‹ or improvised) might be conceptualized as either vocal or instrumental would have been surprising. Still more so would have been the notion that it might occupy a »Grauzone zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus«.[121] Perhaps the perceived problem that the expression »grey area« here connotes lies simply in the fact that the parameters in question are of purely modern invention. For Agricola voices and instruments shared repertories and approaches to performance to the extent that the voice simply *was* an instrument. What separated the two categories in practice (apart from their material attributes) was first and foremost function: the repertory used for worship in cathedrals and chapels, for example, might be said to be vocal (at least in normal circumstances); that for the accompaniment of courtly dance instrumental. But to judge from its circulation, Agricola must have conceived most of his music on the assumption that, once it had served its immediate purpose (of which we have very little knowledge), it would be reused, adapted as required, for a variety of functions that might characteristically be associated with either voices or instruments, or with both, or indeed with neither (in the case of certain kinds of pedagogical books or presentation manuscripts, for example). In the circumstances discussion of his music or of its notated circulation in terms of such classification is bound to run into insuperable difficulties.

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[121] See the introduction to this volume by Nicole Schwindt, p. 15.

Admittedly Agricola's generation would probably be just as bemused by the idea of ›songs without words‹, at least as a means of classification at the point of composition.[122] At this period the conscious preoccupation in all genres was, as I contend above, with *music*, rather than with the expression of words in the sense that later generations (including ours) would come to understand. Hence the fallacy behind the assumption that composers themselves saw the words they set, or those associated with the pre-existent melodies they elaborated, as necessarily defining their works. And hence the ultimate impossibility of achieving a systematic separation of compositions intended for words from those not.[123]

Nevertheless it is legitimate – not to say vital – to seek an understanding of those aspects of the chiefly unnotated music instrumentalists traditionally performed that might have struck Agricola and his contemporaries as sufficiently distinct from anything to come from the throat of a singer to impact on their compositional style in a way that might itself be characterized as ›instrumental‹. The key, I suspect, lies in creative process, rather than in the specific attributes of this or that musical instrument. Captivated, like no other composer of the time, with the techniques and processes of improvisation, Agricola sought to explore how aspects of this fleeting art might be incorporated into and perpetuated in figured music. As noted above, such performance skills were not limited to instrumentalists, but to judge from contemporary reports of star players like Pietrobono, the Fernandes brothers, Augustin Schubinger, and the like, they were what instrumentalists of the time – Agricola perhaps included – deliberately cultivated, and through which the best of them persistently out-performed singers. By turning their traditions to compositional use Agricola could reiterate the words of Tinctoris, quoted above, concerning the sounds that »ad contemplationem gaudiorum supernorum ardentissime cor meum inflammant«.

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[122] The Benedictus from Isaac's *Missa Quant j'ay au cuer*, which circulated widely without its words, is labelled »Absque verbis« (»without words«) in F–Pn, Rés. Vm^{7}676 and I–Bc, Q18.

[123] Jon Banks's *The Instrumental Consort Repertory of the Late Fifteenth Century* (Aldershot, 2006), with its central chapter on »Defining the Repertory«, reached my desk only after this article was finished and about to go to press.

Appendix

Preface to *Trium vocum carmina a diversis musicis composita* (printed by Hieronymus Formschneider, Nuremberg, 1538) from the tenor part book (after microfilm of Jena copy, collated with Howard M Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600: A Bibliography* (rev. reprint, Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 59. English translation by Leofranc Holford–Strevens.

CANDIDIS MUSICIS SALUTEM

En damus vobis magno numero delecta trium vocum Carmina, á probatissimis Musices professoribus, tum veteribus tum recentioribus composita.

Congessimus autem ea singulari studio, non eò solum, ne suavissima summorum in hoc genere ingeniorum monumenta perirent, sed ut etiam iuventutis studia accenderemus ad artem longè omnium suavissimam diligenter complectendam.

Notae enim sunt non solum veterum Graecorum Poetarum, Theognidis, Homeri, & aliorum insignes commendationes, quibus Musicam ornarunt, tanquam perpetuam honestatis et eruditionis comitem, sed etiam Philosophorum iudicia non obscura extant, quae testantur ad Rempublicam pertinere, ut iuventus diligenter discat Musica.

Quod si nihil haberet haec ars praeter illam suavitatem ac oblectationem, an non satis magna ea commendatio esset: praesertim cum haec vita ob curas & negotiorum varietatem non possit esse iucunda, nisi aliqua docta suavitate condiatur.

Existimamus igitur hoc studium nostrum omnibus bonis probatum iri, quod & Reipublicae ac iuventutis commodis consulimus, & suavissimos labores insignium Musicorum ab interitu vindicamus.

Quia autem Carmina haec non unius linguae verba habebant, commodius fore iudicavimus, si obmissis verbis, carmina signaremus numeris.

TO FAIR-MINDED MUSICIANS, GREETING

Look, we give you in great number choice songs for three voices, composed by the most approved exponents of music, both ancient and modern.

We have collected them with singular enthusiasm, not only so that the sweetest productions of the greatest minds in this field should not be lost, but also that we might kindle the enthusiasms of youth to painstakingly embracing this art, by far the sweetest of all.

For well known are not only the notable commendations of the ancient Greek poets, Theognis, Homer, and others, with which they honoured music as the constant companion of uprightness and learning, but there are also far from obscure judgements of the philosophers that attest it to be in the interest of the state that youth should diligently learn music.

But even if there were nothing to this art besides that sweetness and delight, might that not be a sufficient commendation of it, especially since this life, owing to our worries and our many different kinds of business, cannot be pleasant unless it be flavoured with some cultured sweetness?

We therefore think that this enthusiasm of ours will be approved by all good men, since we are both taking thought for the advantage of the state and of youth, and rescuing the sweetest labours of notable musicians from perishing.

But since the words of these songs were in several languages, we judged that it would be more convenient if we left out the words and designated the songs by numbers.

Deformitatem enim res habitura videbatur si nunc Germanica, nunc Gallica, nonnunquam Italica, aut latina commixta essent.	For it appeared that ugliness would result if now German texts, now French, sometimes Italian or Latin, were mingled together.
Deinde in trium vocum carminibus videntur artifices magis sonorum eruditam mixturam spectasse, quám verba.	Then, in songs for three voices, the craftsmen seemed to have been more concerned with a well-trained mingling of sounds than with words.
Hac voluptate eruditus Musicus abunde fruetur, etiam si nulla subiecta verba sint.	The trained musician will enjoy this pleasure in abundance, even if no words are underlaid.
Neque de Autorum nominibus valde fuimus soliciti, quod singuli suas insignes notas habeant, quibus ab eruditis Musicis facile possint agnosci.	Nor did we take much care over the composers' names, since they each have their own notable characteristics, by which trained musicians may easily recognize them.
Bene valete, et fruimini feliciter laboribus nostris. Nam huius generis alia quoque dabimus. Deo aspirante.	Farewell, and enjoy our labours in happiness, for we shall give (you) other things of this nature too, if God breathe his favour upon us.

Eugeen Schreurs

Instrumental Music and Performance Practice in the Low Countries

The Case of Agricola's »D'ung aultre amer« in Context

At the end of the fifteenth century several places in Western Europe witnessed the rise of what we in contemporary musicology could call »independent instrumental chamber music«, often – but not always – intended for homogeneous ensembles of instruments.[1] At present there are no unambiguous answers to questions concerning (social) function (court, city, church, education, private use) of this music, its scoring (is some of this music eventually to be interpreted as a kind of vocal solmization exercise?), manner of performance, organology, or acoustics. Often there are indeed more questions than answers. The Low Countries, among other regions, appear to have played an important role, albeit not an exclusive one, in this complex story, in which Agricola's part is not to be underestimated.

The Low Countries have a long tradition with regard to the use of instruments, on which we are fairly well informed from the fourteenth century on, both iconographically and archivally.

(1) First of all, there are the processions on ecclesiastical feasts such as the patron saint's day, the dedication of the church, and *Corpus Christi* in particular. Such public events witnessed the performance of quite large groups of musicians, whose social status (amateur versus professional) could be rather heterogeneous. Proof of the mixed composition of performers, viz. professionals and amateurs, can be found in the size of the groups which all had to play on the same feast days – it is hardly imaginable that so many professional players would have been available in the Low Countries – as well as in the sometimes rather meagre remuneration for certain categories of musicians. The type of treat (e. g. tripes also points in the direction of amusement.[2]

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[1] I wish to thank Pieter Mannaerts (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen – Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) for reading through this contribution and Peter Van Dessel for the translation.

[2] E. g. Brussels, Algemeen Rijksarchief, Kerkarchief Brabant, Zoutleeuw, kerk, 1214, [fol. 43] Junius [1454]: »Item doe men Sinte Leonaerde omdroech aen die pipers metter trompetten: 15 st.« (»to the pipers and trumpeters, for the procession of St Leonard: 15 st.«), »Item noch aen 8 gesellen die speelden snaerspel: 8 st.« (»to 8 string players: 8 st.«), »Item aen die

Thus in Mechelen in 1418–9 mention is made of no less than 215 players participating in the procession of St Rombout, among them 24 trumpeters, 72 pipers, 61 string players and 58 »other« musicians.[3] Very often the louder wind instruments appear to play primarily for the municipal magistrate, whereas the quieter string players march in front of the statue of Mary. In a similar context, the situation in Leuven is fairly clear from archival evidence; we even have an illustration, albeit from a later date (1594), but in line with a centuries-old tradition. At least the shawm players seem to be professional city minstrels, on account of the municipal blazon on their shoulders (Figures1 and 2).[4]

In some archival sources, e. g. in Maastricht in the fifteenth century, a distinction is sometimes drawn between *lusores principales* (89 players) and *alii* (46 players). Conspicuous, once again, is the large number of musicians (a total of 135 in this case).[5] But in what do the two groups differ? Is there a distinction between players residing (and recognized) in Maastricht, including the four or five permanent city musicians, and itinerant players from outside the city? Or is the difference defined by their respective roles in the procession (place, amount of playing time)? Could this be yet another indication of a distinction between professionals and amateurs, or is it merely a distinction within the group of amateurs? As already mentioned, there are more questions than answers; in any event, there is again an unexplained difference in payment. In addition, the available data are not consistent enough to permit definite conclusions, thus allowing for several hypotheses.

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gesellen van den spele: 1 peter« (»to the fellows of the play: 1 peter«), »Item smorgens aen pensen de gesellen ende verteert: 6 st. 1 oert« (»in the morning for tripes consumed by the players: 6 st. 1 oert«), »Item Jan der Hane [minstrel]: 1 st.« See Lieve De Mecheleer, *Rekeningen van de kerkfabriek van de Sint-Leonarduskerk van Zoutleeuw (1405, 1452–1599)*. Fontes historiae artis neerlandicae 3 (Brussels, 1997).

[3] Raymond van Aerde, *Ménéstrels Communaux & instrumentistes divers établis ou de passage à Malines, de 1311 à 1790*, (Mechelen, 1911), p. 4. The following terminology is used to indicate the various categories of players: 1485–6: *Trompers*, *trompet* (trumpeters), *trompet slaeger* (drummer), *pipers*, *pijffers* (pipers); 1487–8: *Heeren pipen* (lords' piper), *biscops pipen* (bishop's piper), *stadtspijpers* (city piper); 1495–6: *snaerspeelders* (string players), *luyters* (lutenists), *ministreerders*, *ministrelen*, *speelluyden* (minstrels). Other examples: 1414–5: 24 *trompers*, 58 *pipers*, 69 *snaerspeelders*, 51 minstrels; in total 202 musicians; 1428–9: 24 *trompers*, 35 *pipers*, 64 *snaerpeelders*, 24 [minstrels]; in total 147 musicians.

[4] Gilbert Huybens, *Muziek te Leuven in de 16e eeuw* (Leuven, 1982), pp. 20–7.

[5] Eugeen Schreurs, »Music for Canons, Emperors, Dukes and Prince Bishops in the Collegiate Churches of Maastricht (c. 1450–1520),« *Yearbook of the Alamire Foundation* 7 (2007), forthcoming.

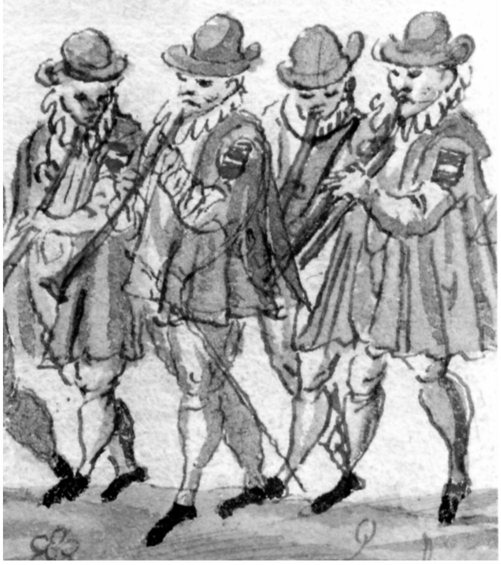
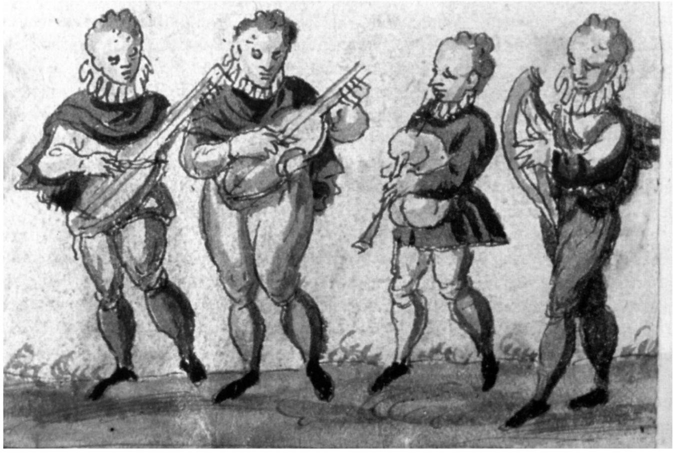


Figure 1: City minstrels with loud wind instruments in the procession of 1594 with municipal blazon on the shoulder[6]

Figure 2: Musicians with two different types of stringed instruments, a bagpipe and a harp in the procession of 1594[7]



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[6] Chronicle *Antiquitates Lovaniensis* of Willem Boonen, Leuven, Stadsmuseum, s.s.; taken from *Petrus Phalesius en het stedelijk muziekleven in de Vlaamse renaissancestad Leuven*, ed. Nele Gabriëls and Eugeen Schreurs (Leuven, 2005), p. 15.

[7] Ibid., p. 58.

Often we can find more detailed information on such musicians in smaller towns that regularly called upon (itinerant) minstrels, for the accounts of these towns are frequently more detailed and specific. Thus in Zoutleeuw in 1453 several musicians are brought into play in the procession of the local patron St Leonard.[8]

(2) Equally important for the consolidation of a permanent instrumental ensemble was the establishment in Antwerp of the municipal evening music in 1483. From that moment the Antwerp city musicians played (polyphonic) music daily as salaried employees of the city. We can only guess at their repertoire, but certain textless works can surely be taken into consideration, although improvisation on a *cantus firmus* will presumably also have played an important role. There were three of them in the fifteenth century, and certainly five from 1530.[9] In Bruges the situation was similar: four municipal players were available from 1457 to 1482, and five until c. 1530. Here too all of the players, city minstrels and other, ›free« minstrels formed a guild, which had its own chapel.[10] A daily concert in the form of a *Salve* or *Benediction* was played in the church of St Donaas. Reinhard Strohm also assumes the performance of sacred works, e. g. Marian works and parts of masses. In any event, we know from a variety of sources, e. g. from Bruges, that such players performed polyphonic works (Dutch songs, French chansons, motets, dances).[11] In Ghent, the birthplace of Agricola and

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[8] June 1460: »Item Johannes van Halle ende sijn sone voir tsakrament ghespeelt: 3 st.« (»to Johannes van Halle and his son for playing before the Sacrament: 3 st.«), »Item die hoechpipers: 15st.« (»to the loud pipers: 15 st.«), »Item 9 gheselle die opt snaer speelden, ellic 1 st., maken: 9 st.« (»9 fellows who played on strings, to each 1 st., making 9 st.«); »Item noch andere speelluden: 2 st.« (»still other minstrels: 2 st.«): De Mecheleer, Rekeningen (cf. fn. 2), p. 68.

[9] Godelieve Spiessens, »De Antwerpse stadsspeellieden. Deel I: 15e en 16e eeuw,« *De Noordgouw* 10 (1970), pp. 2–4. The other players who lived in Antwerp as citizens were members of the musicians' guild of St Job and Mary Magdalen, which had its chapel in the church of St James. See Godelieve Spiessens, »Geschiedenis van de Gilde van de Antwerpse Speellieden (Deel I: XVIde eeuw),« *Belgisch tijdschrift voor muziekgeschiedenis – Revue belge de musicologie* 22 (1968), pp. 5–26.

[10] Pieter Andriessen, *Die van Muziken gheerne horen. Muziek in Brugge 1200–1800* (Bruges, 2002), pp. 88–94. See also Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* [Oxford, 1985], rev. edn. (Oxford, 1990), p. 144.

[11] 1559: on Sundays and feast days they had to play »telcker reyse twee liedekens ofte motetten« (»every time two songs or motets«): Andriessen, Die van Muziken, ibid., p. 86. And upon the release of Maximiliaan in 1488 the players performed, after the »Te deum, Ave Regina Celorum ende meer ander liedekins van muzycke«: ibid., pp. 90–1. The players also possessed partbooks with tenor melodies (ibid. p. 90), for the case of the itinerant trumpeter Zorzi Trombetta (mid-15th century see the manuscript GB–Lbl,

Jacob Obrecht, who's father Willem was a city minstrel, the situation was much the same. There the chapel of the musicians, dedicated to St Job and St Gummarus, was established in the crypt of the church of St John, later in that of St Nicholas.[12]

(3) Apart from the musicians who performed in processions and the city minstrels, we also encounter, especially from the end of the fifteenth century, individual and itinerant instrumentalists. These were primarily wind players, in most cases probably cornettists. Often they would perform together with the vocal ensemble of a court chapel or collegiate church. A well-known and frequently cited example is that of the German Augustin Schubinger – semi-itinerant since he was also attached to the court – who performed at high mass in the church of St Rombouts in Mechelen in 1501.[13] Similar payments are also found earlier, e. g. in 1496/97 in St Gudule in Brussels, in 1502 in the collegiate church of Our Lady in Tongeren, and in 1503 in St Servaas in Maastricht.[14] In passing it may be pointed out that in St Servaas in the same year Marbrianus de Orto was a canon, that Johannes Ghiselin was ordained a priest, and that Obrecht was treated to white whine for as yet unknown services. All three composed works without text which were possibly intended for instrumental performance. The Burgundian court chapel also visited the city several times, for which they received treats. This undoubtedly resulted in various musical exchanges, e. g. with regard to repertoire, performance practice, etc.[15]

(4) Fourthly, we note that c. 1500 the homogeneously composed music ensemble gradually gained ground, in sacred (for example trombones) as well as secular contexts (viols). At the beginning of the sixteenth century the

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Cotton Titus A.xxvi). In connection with Maximilian see also Keith Polk, »Susato and Instrumental Music in Flanders in the Sixteenth Century,« *Tielman Susato and the Music of his Time*. Bucina 5 (Hillsdale, NY, 2005), p. 77.

[12] Paul Trio and Barbara Haggh, »Confraternities in Ghent and Music,« *Musicology and Archival Research. Colloquium Proceedings, Brussels ... 1993*. Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique Numéro spécial 46, ed. Barbara H. Haggh (Brussels, 1994), pp. 54–6. See there also further information concerning the players' guilds in the Low Countries in general, pp. 54–63. For a synthesis with regard to the minstrels see esp. Polk, Susato (cf. fn. 11), pp. 61–100.

[13] Keith Polk, »Innovation in Instrumental Music 1450–1520,« *Music in the German Renaissance. Sources, Styles, and Contexts*, ed. John Kmetz (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 205–10. His brother was noted as a performer on the viol, and another brother, Michel, owned a *viola* and a lute.

[14] Schreurs, Music for Canons (cf. fn. 7).

[15] Ibid.

English court of Henry VIII employed five trombonists, a number that dropped, probably by chance, to four in 1504. Contacts between the English and Burgundian courts were intensive, and so some parallels may be assumed. Accordingly, it is no surprise to find, at the court of Philip the Fair, five trombonists as well, in addition to players of *musette*, *vielle*, *flutes allemandes* and *tambourin*. Besides these musicians we find, listed separately and with an annual salary of 26 pounds, Augustin Schubinger, cornett player and lutenist of the king.[16] There are no explicit archival references to a homogeneous string ensemble, but we may logically assume its existence (see below).[17]

It is within this briefly sketched ›musical biotope‹ that Agricola, who according to his *epitaph* enjoyed fame as a string player,[18] together with the organist Henricus Bredemers and singers/composers such as Pierre de la Rue, de Orto and Johannes Braçonnier, thrived and that his works are to be situated. As already said – apart from the five trombonists – there is no explicit archival reference to a homogeneous consort of instruments at the court, but in view of the versatility of the aforementioned instrumentalists and singers in this period its existence cannot be ruled out. By way of illustration: in 1515, Petrus Alamire, scribe and *garde de livres* at the Burgundian court, singer, composer and also known for his ›diplomatic‹ activities, sold thirteen crumhorns to the English king.[19] This fact, together with the existence of pieces which because of the tessitura can be played on the crumhorn, allows us to assume the existence of a homogeneous crumhorn consort in North European courts. In this connection it may be pointed out that Alamire himself composed a five-part *Tandernaken*, and the Copenhagen version (DK–Kk, 1872) specifically stipulates »crumhorn« for the bass part. The ambitus as well as the writing of the other voices seem to indicate that this piece was specifically intended for crumhorns. This diversity of specific but varied homogeneous scoring should cause no surprise, for also outside the court context (e. g. among the Antwerp city musicians) there are sufficient indications that players mastered more than one instrument.[20] Maximilian had four viol players during his reign († 1519), and his son Philip the Fair probably had a small group of string players, just like Margaret of Austria.[21] This would seem to indicate the beginning of a tradition at the Burgundian-Habsburg court, whereby the string consort gradually took shape. Literary sources, too, make reference to musical performances which have been termed *whole consort* in later English secondary literature. Thus a Brussels dialogue booklet dating from c. 1540 mentions four German traverso players.[22] Viols are clearly mentioned in Tielman Susato's *Sixiesme livre contenant trente et une chansons nouvelles des chansons convenables & propices a jouer sure les violes & aultre instrumentz musicales* (Antwerp 1545, RISM 1545^{14}).[23] A bit later, in 1562, we even find, in a confraternity context, an English viol (or violin?) consort at 's-Hertogenbosch.[24]

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[16] Bruno Bouckaert and Eugeen Schreurs, »Hans Nagel, performer and spy in England and Flanders (ca.. 1490–1531),« Tielman Susato (cf. fn. 11), pp. 101–15.

[17] The term »vielle« can, in principle, refer to several types of bowed strings. Moreover, it may be assumed, by analogy with the versatility of the city minstrels who could play several instruments, that this was also the case with court musicians. See e. g. Andriessen, Die van Muziken (cf. fn. 10), pp. 78–91.

[18] Rob Wegman, »Agricola, Alexander,« *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edn. (London, 2001), vol. 1, p. 225.

[19] There is also a reference to a certain Alexander Aurifabri, possibly to be identified with Agricola? See Eugeen Schreurs, »Petrus Alamire: Music Calligrapher, Musician, Composer, Spy,« *The Treasury of Petrus Alamire: Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts 1500–1535*, ed. Herbert Kellman (Ghent, 1999), p. 20.

In this context it is understandable that at the end of the fifteenth century a specific literature was created for instrumental ensemble, homogeneous or not. At the birth of this genre, however, a strict distinction was not always drawn between instrumental exercise material based on vocal models (e. g. mass parts), where the focus is on rhythmic (e. g. mensural proportions), melodic or combined difficulties and purely instrumental pieces. In some cases one could even assume that we are not dealing with instrumental music, but with solmization or »passaggi«-exercises for singers, although some works may of course have served a double purpose and were thus multifunctional.

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[20] See Andriessen, Die van Muziken (cf. fn. 10), pp. 78–91.

[21] Polk, Susato (cf. fn. 11), pp. 62–7. In 1524–5 there is even a mention of a »groote vyoole«. The term »vyoole« is somewhat ambiguous and can refer, depending on the context, to a violin or a viol.

[22] C. 1540: »ick hoorde oock seer ghenoechelijck spelen met vier duytsche fluyte ... My dunckt dat Duytsche waren, want die van onsen lande en spelen in sulcker manieren niet als sy-lieden speelden, oft het moest zyn van 's Keysers volck, naer myn verstandt« (»I also heard playing by four German flutes ... I thought they were German, for our [own] countrymen do not play like they do, lest they be of the Emperor's folk, in my view«): Réne Bernard Lenaerts, *Het Nederlands polifonies lied in de zestiende eeuw* (Mechelen, 1933), p. 155.

[23] Kristine K. Forney, »New Insights into the Career and Musical Contributions of Tielman Susato,« Tielman Susato (cf. fn. 11), p. 16.

[24] Véronique Roelvink, *Gegeven den sangeren. Meerstemmige muziek bij de Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch in de zestiende eeuw* ('s-Hertogenbosch, 2002), pp. 87–8. Mention is made of the purchase of English »violen«, to be played by the singers while seated during mealtimes of the Confraternity. Hence the assumption that these were viols (da gamba): »laeten maicken in Engelant een cofferen met vyff violen, [samen met een] vyffcanten lessenair dair die sangers vyff boecken op leggen als zy opte violen speelen« (»Have made in England a case with five viols, [together with a] five-sided lectern as the singers put five books on it when they play the viols«). In addition, chairs are purchased: »vyff scabellen, voirde zangers opte sitten alse opte violen speelen« (»for the singers to sit upon when they play on the viols«). See ibid., pp. 279–80.

In any event, this nascent instrumental music and its ›hybrid relatives‹ enjoyed an increasing success and the literature was adopted and stimulated by minstrels and the citizenry, which in turn led to a greater demand for manuscripts, and later for prints, of such music. However, few of these manuscripts have survived. Since these partbooks often contained no illumination, there was no art-historical reason to preserve them. Despite the many losses it is still possible to draw up a limited list of manuscripts from the Low Countries with instrumental or at least ›instrumental-looking‹, textless music. Needless to say, this list must be viewed in the context of the much greater number of similar manuscripts preserved in Western Europe (e.g. I–Bc, Q17; DK–Kk, 1872; I–Fn, B.R. 229; CH–SGs, 461 and CH–SGs, 462; A–Wn, Mus. 18810). In time, instrumental music also came to be printed: Ottaviano Petrucci, in his *Harmonice musices Odhecaton A* (Venice, 1501, RISM 1501), *Canti B* (Venice, 1502, RISM 1502^2) and *Canti C* (Venice, 1504, RISM 1504^3), seems to have seen advantage in it. Similarly, Pierre Attaingnant, in his Paris chanson book of 1533, apparently considered the time right to publish vocal chansons for recorder and/or *traverso* consort: *Vingt et sept chansons à quatre parties a la fleuste dallement … et a la fleuste a neuf trous* (RISM 1533^1) as well did Susato in 1545 as mentioned above.[25]

The textless pieces or the works displaying instrumental features (e.g. extended ambitus, leaps, runs) are characterized by the fact that they are mostly in three or four parts. Exceptions are the two-part rhythmic ›exercises‹ from the *Segovia Manuscript* and a few five-part compositions such as the already mentioned *Tandernaken* by Alamire.[26] In addition, these textless pieces in three or four parts often contain rhythmically lively passages and an exchange of thematic material that goes beyond the use of the same *cantus firmus*.[27]

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[25] See Howard Mayer Brown, *Instrumental music printed before 1600* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 43–4.

[26] Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music, 1380–1500* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 606.

[27] For the rise of instrumental music see also Strohm, ibid., pp. 358–9, 568–70. For *T'andernaken/Tanndernac* see Schreurs, Petrus Alamire (cf. fn. 19), p. 20.

Table 1:
Sources from the Low Countries containing textless compositions (c. 1485–1550)[28]

PLACE	ORIGIN	PURPOSE/ OWNER	NUMBER OF PIECES/ CONTENT	DATE	FASCIMILE/ EDITION
Tongeren, St Nicholas, s.s.	LC	didactic use by »zangmeester«/ choirboys?	9 vocal/ textless (incomplete)	c. 1485	Schreurs, Anthologie, pp. 66–7
B–Br, II/270	LC	monastery (?) (*Devotio moderna* movement)	29 vocal/ textless	c. 1500	Bouckaert-Schreurs, Collectie[29]
E–SE, s.s.	Spain/ LC	court	204 vocal/ textless	c. 1502	Segovia Chansonnier
NL–M, s.s.	LC	private use/ church musician?	11 vocal/ textless (incomplete)	c. 1505	Smits Van Waesberghe[30]
GB–Lbl, Add. 35087	LC	Lauweryn van Watervliet	78 vocal	c. 1505–6	McMurtry[31]
I–Fc, Basevi 2439	LC / Italy	Agostini Ciardi family/ Siena	87 vocal/ textless	c. 1505–8	Meconi[32]
B–Br, IV.90/ B–Tv, 94	LC	private/ Bruges	22 vocal	1511	Kessels[33]

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[28] Some of the sources are not yet repertoried in RISM or *Census Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400–1550*. Renaissance manuscript studies 1, 5 vols. (Neuhausen-Stuttgart, 1979–88). For most of these sources see *Anthologie van muziekfragmenten uit de Lage Landen (middeleeuwen – renaissance). Polyfonie, monodie en leisteenfragmenten in facsimile*, ed. Eugeen Schreurs (Peer, 1995) where also references will be found to modern editions or commentaries. LC in column 2 is an abbreviation for »Low Countries«.

[29] *Collectie middelnderlandse en latijnse geestelijke liederen. Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS II 270, ca. 1500*. Monumenta Flandriae musica 7, ed. Bruno Bouckaert, Eugeen Schreurs, Jeske Van Dongen, Andries Welkenhuysen, and Jeanine De Landtsheer, Leuven 2005.

[30] Jozef Smits Van Waesberghe, »Een 15de eeuw muziekboek van de stadsminstrelen van Maastricht?,« *Renaissance-Muziek 1400–1600. Donum natalicium René Bernard Lenaerts* (Leuven, 1969), pp. 247–73.

[31] *Chansonnier of Hieronymus Lauweryn van Watervliet. London, British Library Ms. Add. 35087*, facs. edn., introd. William McMurtry (Peer, 1989).

[32] *Basevi Codex. Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio, MS 2439*, facs. edn., introd. Honey Meconi (Peer, 1990).

[33] Leon Kessels, »The Brussels/Tournai-Partbooks: Structure, Illumination, and Flemish Repertory,« *Tijdschrift van de vereniging voor Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis* 37 (1987), pp. 82–110. Bernard Huys, »A Recently Rediscovered Sixteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscript: A Study of the Sources and Concordances of the Third ›Tournai‹ Partbook,« Musicology and Archival Research (cf. fn. 12), pp. 522–35.

B–SNabbeel	LC	?	3 vocal / partly textless (incomplete)	early 16th century	Schreurs, forthcoming
B–BR, Stadsarchief, 538, muziekfragmenten A-F	LC	composer (?)	9 vocal / textless (incomplete)	c. 1530	Schreurs, Anthologie, pp. 87–96
F–CA, 125–8	LC	Zeghere Van Male	224 vocal / textless, dances	1542	Diehl[34]
B–OU, 50a	LC	composer (?)	2 vocal / textless (incomplete)	before 1549	Schreurs, Anthologie, p. 103
B–BR, Stadsarchief, 539, ms. 41	LC	Bass partbook	65 vocal / textless	finished c. 1556	Vanhulst[35]

One of the most creatively reworked chansons is undoubtedly the *rondeau quatrain* »D'ung aultre amer« of Johannes Ockeghem, which in this article will be further discussed primarily in view of Agricola's contribution. In homage to Ockeghem numerous anonymous composers, as well as such masters as Johannes Tinctoris, Alexander Agricola, Philippe Basiron, Marbrianus de Orto, Jean Le Brun and Pierre de la Rue, wrote compositional variations on this widely circulated piece, the basic version of which is known from seventeen manuscript sources.[36] Most of the known composers can be linked in one way or another to the Burgundian court, the Low Countries or the French court. The arrangements — by chance also seventeen in number — have been published together in modern edition by Richard Taruskin in the series *Ogni Sorti* with the individual parts in original mensural notation.[37] These are compositionally very ingenious variants, and highly inventive contrapuntally, melodically, as well as rhythmically.

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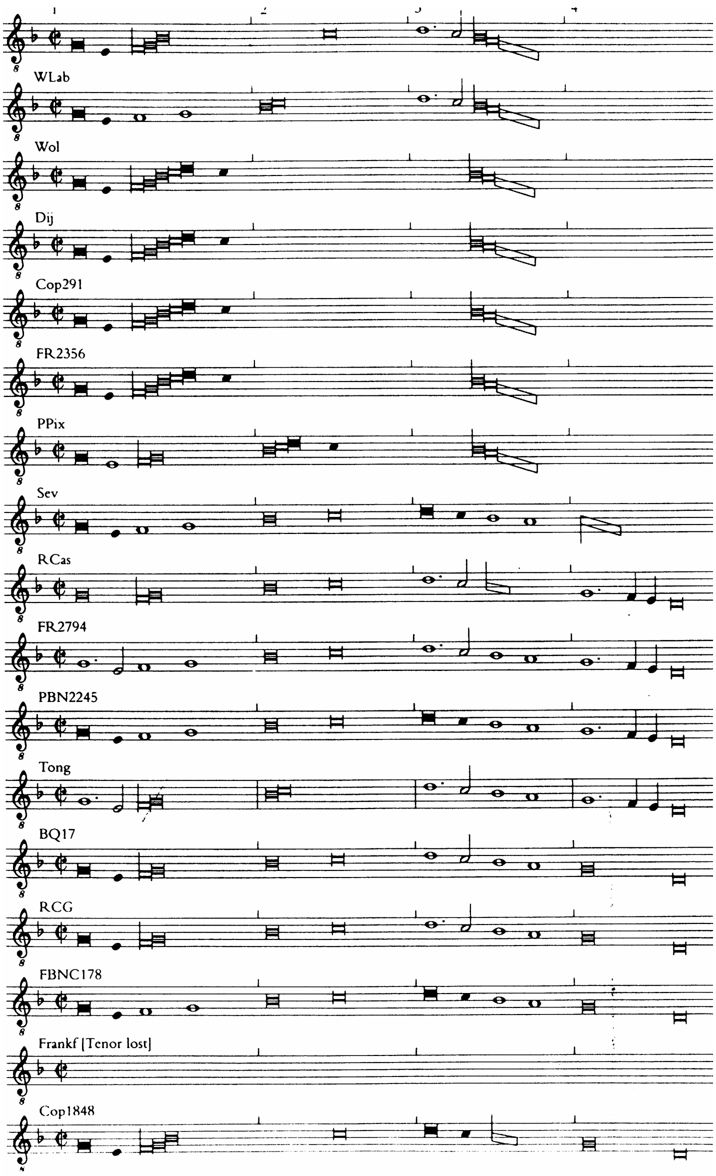
[34] George Karl Diehl, *The Partbooks of a Renaissance Merchant, Cambrai Bibliothèque Municipale, MSS 125–128* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974).

[35] Henri Vanhulst, »Le manuscrit 41 des Archives communales de Bruges,« *Le concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance. Actes du XXXIVe Colloque International d'Études Humanistes, Tours … 1991*, ed. Jean-Michel Vaccaro (Paris, 1995), pp. 231–42.

[36] Eugeen Schreurs, »New Findings on Music Fragments from Tongeren with two Chansons by Ockeghem,« *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke vereniging voor Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis* 47 (1997), pp. 119–138.

[37] *D'ung aultre amer. Seventeen settings in two, three, four, and 5 parts (modern score), 5 partbooks in original notation, notation guide*. Renaissance Standards 6, ed. Richard Taruskin (Miami: Ogni Sorte, 1983).


1
2
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WLab
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Dij
Cop291
FR2356
PPix
Sev
RCas
FR2794
PBN2245
Tong
BQ17
RCG
FBNC178
Frankf [Tenor lost]
Cop1848

Figure 3: Table with the first four bars (longae) of the tenor[38]

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[38] Taken from Schreurs, New Findings (cf. fn. 36), p. 121. The sigla refer to the Census Catalogue (cf. fn. 26).

The base is always one of the three voices of the model, so in fact we are dealing with a series of variations on a variable *cantus firmus*. In the following overview, which is based on the numbering of Taruskin, the seventeen compositions are grouped according to resemblant criteria (increasing number of parts, sometimes according to compositional procedure). It will be clear from the following survey that Agricola, with no less than four versions to his credit, was a key figure in this *D'ung aultre amer* tradition. The overview also sets the Agricola versions in a broader compositional context and shows that he elaborates the theme in a very original and highly varied way, and also that he undoubtedly must have been acquainted with (a number of) the versions enumerated in Figure 3.

First of all, there is the basic version **1** (F–Dm, 517, fol. 42^{v}–43^{r}) by Ockeghem, preserved – as said above – in at least seventeen manuscripts (aside from the printed settings for solo lute by Francesco Spinacino, Venice, 1507, RISM 1507^{5} and 1507^{6}). A simple comparison of the first four bars (with two semibreves per imaginary ›bar‹) of the tenor in the basic version reveals that only three of the sixteen versions (the tenor of the anonymous version no. 16 from Frankfurt is lost) are wholly identical in notation (colours, ligatures, rhythmic variants in the further course of the piece).[39] The anonymous Tongeren version (no. 12, c. 1472–85) is in a sense somewhat unique in that tenor and superius are written out in score notation, possibly for didactic reasons.[40] Also in this version the *f'* of the superius at the end of the first phrase is raised to f' sharp. This is quite unusual: indeed, since for Johannes Tinctoris the addition of *musica ficta* was to singers (and instrumentalists) an »ass's mark« (*asininum*).[41] Besides I–Fr, 2794 (c. 1480–8, no. 10) and I–Rc, 2856 (c. 1480–90, no. 9), both ascribed to Ockeghem, it is also the only version not to begin with a colour.

Version **2** (E–Sc, 5–1–43, fol. 51^{v}–53^{r}), anonymous, is based on a kind of substitution technique: the upper voices of Ockeghem's chanson are preserved, but the countertenor is replaced by a more lively and lower bass part: in other words, it is a kind of parody.

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[39] Schreurs, New Findings (cf. fn. 36), pp. 120, 123–6.

[40] Schreurs, Anthologie (cf. fn. 26), p. 66–7.

[41] Tinctoris regards avoidance of the tritone as a matter of course (see Robert Toft, *Aural Images of Lost Traditions. Sharps and Flats in the Sixteenth Century* (Toronto, 1992), p. 11; see also *Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum:* http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/cgi-bin/chmtl/isearchtml): »Ut autem evitetur tritoni durities necessario ex quarta specie diapenthe isti duo toni formantur. Neque tunc b mollis signum apponi est necessarium, immo si appositum videatur, asininum esse dicitur, ut hic probatur« (»Nor then is it necessary to mark the sign *bmollis* [to remove the tritone]; rather, if it is seen to have been marked, it is said to be asinine«).

Two anonymous two-part works (versions **3** and **4;** E–Sc, 5–1–43, fol. 132^{v} and 133^{r}) are cleverly based on the technique of the *redicta* whereby a short melody of a few notes is immediately repeated, and this successively in combination with the superius and then the tenor of the model. This *redicta*-principle finds its culmination in the four-part version **13** (*Canti B*, RISM 1502^{2}, fol.27^{v}–28^{r}) by de Orto in which no less than two voices are based on this repetition technique, albeit that each phrase is repeated a fifth higher.

Tinctoris was also known as an important theoretician. He does himself full justice in the two-part version **5** (I–PEc, 1013, fol. 89^{v}–90^{r}), a didactic exercise on the proportions, in which *sesquialtera* and *sesquitertia* are applied.

An ingenious canonical technique in the higher fifth is applied from a distance of a semibreve in version **6** (I–Bc, Q 17, fol. 46^{v}–47^{r}). Imitation between tenor and bass is very intense in version **7** (I–Bc, Q 17, fol. 56^{v}–57^{r}).

The settings by Agricola are crucial to the composer's *œuvre* because this is the piece of which he wrote the most settings, allowing us to gain insight in his compositional skill(s). Version **8** (E–SE, s. s., fol. 153) (three-part)[42] is particularly striking for its virtuoso leaps and extended tessitura of more than two octaves. Some have argued that these are highly exceptional vocal *passaggi* ›avant la lettre‹, others that these passages reflect the ambitus of viols: *f*–a"; *c*–*f*'; *F*–*b*. This music is indeed well adapted to proficient viol players, although it is too early to speak of truly idiomatic writing. The two outer voices (superius and bassus) are the most lively, repeatedly imitate one another and often run in parallel tenths, a procedure regularly applied by Agricola in this type of work. The whole is built around an almost undecorated *cantus firmus* that most closely resembles (in ligatures, *colores*) the version by Ockeghem in the French cluster of manuscripts dating from c. 1460–75 (*Chansonniers Nivelle*, F–Pn, Rés. Vmc.57; *Laborde,* US–Wc, M2.1 L25 Case; *Wolfenbüttel,* D–W, Guelf. 287 Extrav.; *Dijon,* F–Dm, 517; *Copenhagen,* DK–Kk, Thott 291).

Version **9** (I–Fc, Basevi 2439, fol. 70^{v}–71^{r}), also by Agricola and likewise in three parts,[43] is suited – unlike version 8 – for a low viol consort (alto, tenor, bass, [eventually three alto's]).[44] In view of the ambitus and the fact that the lute was also established at the Burgundian court (see Schubinger) one cannot rule out a scoring with lute(s).[45] Agricola has now transposed the superius down an octave and uses it as a *cantus firmus*. Octave transpositions are rather uncommon.[46] In addition, this setting is remarkable for its vivid decoration of the *cantus firmus* by means of leaps, runs and ornaments. The capriciousness of these ornaments is a frequent and almost exclusive feature of Agricola's music (e. g. bar 6). Despite the considerable liveliness of the piece Agricola still manages to include some fanciful imitation (e. g. bars 1–2, 4, 6, 7, 11–13).

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[42] *Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia*. Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 22, ed. Edward R. Lerner, vol. 5*: Cantiones, Musica Instrumentalis, Opera dubia* (American Institute of Musicocogy, 1970), no. 60, pp. 88–9.

[43] Ibid., no. 59, pp. 87–8.

Version **10** (F–Pn, fr. 15123, *Pixérécourt chansonnier*, fol. 117^{v}–118^{r}, anonymous, three-part) can be reckoned among the ›free versions‹: only the opening of the composition is recognizable, but it soon deviates, with only incidentally a fleeting reference to the model.

Version 7 (I–Bc, Q 17, fol. 56^{v}–57^{r}, anonymous, three-part) and Version **11** (I–Bc, Q 17, fol. 55^{v}–56^{r}; Basiron, four-part, canon between tenor and altus) are characterized by a subtle play of syncopes. In I–Bc, Q 17 the two pieces follow one another, and also because of the stylistic relationship (e. g. octave leaps) one could attribute both works (and even version 6) to Basiron as suggested by Taruskin.

Versions **14** and **15** (I–Fc, Basevi 2439, fol. 7^{v}–8^{r}, 8^{v}–9^{r}) are again by Agricola. With three versions of *D'ung aultre amer* in the *Basevi codex*, the piece is well represented in this manuscript, which belongs to the corpus of so-called Alamire manuscripts. He uses the tenor twice as *cantus firmus* and sets it against the three voices which in a rather rhythmically way imitate one another. But this is done in two completely different ways. In version **14**[47] Agricola first plays with a figure consisting of a descending leap. A bit further he employs free counterpoint with only incidentally a literal imitation (e. g. bar 9). The strength of the composition lies primarily in the independence of each voice and the play with rhythmic imitation (dotted figures). In notation (ligatures, runs) the *cantus firmus* most closely resembles no. 9 of Figure 3 (I–Rc, 2856).

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[44] See in this context the existence of a »groote vyoole« (»a big viol/violin«) in Mechelen (cf. fn. 21), however admittedly this reference is from the mid-1520s.

[45] On the Schubinger family cf. fn. 16.

[46] A similar transposition of an octave is applied, in the Tongeren manuscript, to Ockeghem's »Ma Maistressee« which is only partly preserved. See Schreurs, New findings (cf. fn. 36), pp. 130–1.

[47] Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 42), no. 57, pp. 85–6.

Version **15** (Agricola)[48] shows a more marked structure: in phrases 1 and 2 (following the syntactic structure of the music and of the text) the attention is focused mainly on the imitation of a cadential figure, starting with the altus. This is combined with a more simple imitation of a descending fifth in bar 2, between bass and superius. In phrase 3 Agricola chooses to imitate the *cantus firmus* in longer note values. In phrase 4 he opts for an imitation of the descending figure, ending on a long, lively plagal cadence. The *cantus firmus* resembles version 9 (I–Rc, 2856), but sometimes (e.g. the beginning) even more no. 10 in Figure 3 (I–Fr, 2794).

Versions **12** (I–Bc, Q 17, fol. 57^v–58^r, Basiron) and **16** (A–Wn, 18746, no. 17, Le Brun) may be reckoned among the so-called »combinative« chansons. The first combines in masterly fashion »L'homme armé« in the tenor with the *cantus firmus* in the superius. Now and then altus and bass still have room to imitate the »L'homme armé« melody. In view of the repeats and leaps the alto and bass appear less ›vocal«. The version by Le Brun, who was active at the French court (Bourges, Sainte-Chapelle), uses the melody as a *cantus firmus* in the superius, but combines it with Colinet de Lannoy's well-known chanson »Cela sans plus«. Conspicuous in the bass are the repeated leaps of an ascending fifth (*G–d*) and fourth (*G–c*).

La Rue's version (no. **17**; A–Wn, 18746, no. 16) is the most monumental, both for its five parts and for its polyphonic writing, with a fine example of so-called pre-imitation in bars 1 to 5. The base is the *cantus firmus* in the tenor, resembling most closely the tenor of nos. 9–12 in Figure 3.[49]

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From the writing of the works and the typology of the sources one may conclude that vocal and instrumental practice pieces began to lead an independent life. In other words, we are probably witnessing the ›birth‹ of instrumental ensemble music, or at least at a pivotal moment in the evolution towards instrumental independence. But it is very difficult, and in part artificial as well, to draw a very strict boundary, for most of these works were multifunctional, sometimes tacking between instrumental – in this context one can also think of the building of stringed instruments in families –, vocal (e.g. solmization exercises to be vocalized, sometimes with a didactic dimension), or written-out vocal improvisation.

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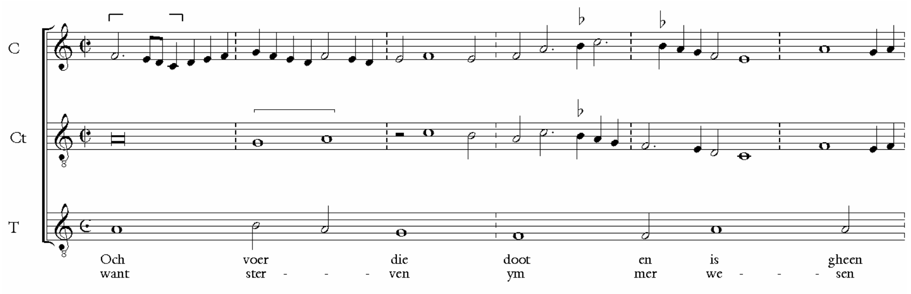
[48] Ibid., no. 58, pp. 86–7.

[49] Schreurs, New findings (cf. fn. 36), p. 121 and pp. 123–6.

At the risk of increasing this ambiguity even further, I would like to draw attention, within the context of an overview of the sources from the Low Countries, to the anonymous three-part *Och voer die doot* from manuscript II 270 of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Brussels (fols. 130^{v}–132^{r}).


C
Ct
T
Och voer die doot en is gheen
want ster - - - ven ym mer we - - - sen

Example 1: Beginning of »Och voer die doot« (*Tandernaken*)[50]

Although this work is included in a manuscript of clearly vocal conception (and probably meant rather for ›reading along‹ than for singing) it is very instrumental in character (e. g. the long note values of the tenor, making that part – at least according to modern standards – virtually unsingable). The *cantus firmus* in the tenor is provided with text, and could eventually with a few modifications, perhaps be sung, but it seems to me very unlikely. But the extended tessitura of the other voices, the leaps, the fact that the *cantus firmus* can be identified with the well-known *Tandernaken* melody, indicate that we are dealing rather with instrumental music, albeit that here too – perhaps again purely theoretically – the possibility must be considered that these are *passaggi* meant to be vocalized in an improvisatory manner or at least within an improvisatory tradition, or even a kind of ›solfège-exercises‹.

In the present state of our knowledge I would leave it to the musicians to experiment with possible performance solutions, either instrumental or vocal, but with a personal preference for an instrumental performance of those pieces that appear to be ›atypically‹ vocal, for instance because a text is lacking. Whether or not we are hereby attending the ›birth‹ of instrumental music for *whole consort* – there are arguments *pro* and *contra* – I leave to the discretion of a critical and creative performer.

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[50] Taken from Collectie (cf. fn. 27), no. 10, p. 98.

Aufführungskontexte heute

Marc Lewon

»Alexandre Agricola et ung bon joueur de luz«
Agricola und die Laute

In einem Brief aus dem Jahre 1492 schreibt König Karl VIII. von Frankreich an Piero de' Medici, den Sohn des gerade verstorbenen Lorenzo de' Medici:

> Cher et amé cousin: Nous avons puis nagueres esté advertiz que Alexandre Agricola, chantre de nostre chappelle, et ung bon joueur de luz en sa compaignie arriverent ou temps de feu nostre cousin le Seigneur Laurens de Medicis, vostre pere, en la cité de Florence. Et pource que nous desirons singulierement recouvrer en nostre dicte chappelle icellui Alexandre, nous lui escripvons presentement qu'il s'en vienne devers nous et qu'il amene avec luy ledit joueur de luz ...
> Donné a Poissy le XXV me jour d'avril.
>
> Werter und geliebter Cousin: Wir wurden unlängst davon in Kenntnis gesetzt, dass Alexander Agricola, Sänger Unserer Kapelle, und ein guter Lautenist in seiner Gesellschaft während der (Regierungs-)Zeit Unseres kürzlich verstorbenen Cousins, des Herrn Lorenzo de' Medici, Eures Vaters, in der Stadt Florenz angekommen ist. Da Wir ausdrücklich die Rückkehr dieses Alexander an Unsere Kapelle wünschen, schreiben Wir ihm umgehend, damit er vor Uns trete und besagten Lautenisten mitbringe ...
> Gegeben zu Poissy, am 25. Tag des April.[1]

Wenn man von diesem Zitat einmal absieht, so ist es zunächst schwer, Agricolas Œuvre mit der Laute in eine direkte Verbindung zu bringen: Es sind keine Lautenkompositionen von ihm überliefert und es gibt keine Nachweise dafür, dass er dieses Instrument selbst gespielt, eigens dafür geschrieben oder es in Aufführungen seiner Musik eingesetzt hätte.

Zwar wird die Formulierung »clarus vocum manuumque« aus seinem Epitaph (»der Stimme und Hände wegen berühmt«) in der Regel dahingehend ausgelegt, dass Agricola berühmt für »seinen Gesang und sein Instrumentalspiel« war, er neben seiner Tätigkeit als Sänger also auch Instrumente beherrschte.[2] Obwohl diese Deutung durchaus plausibel erscheint, sollte man aber zumindest in Erwägung ziehen, dass die Formulierung sich auf die Disziplinen des »Musicus« und »Cantor« beziehen könnte, und gewählt wurde, um herauszustellen, dass Agricola die Fertigkeiten des praktizierenden Musikers ebenso wie die des gelehrten Musiktheoretikers und Komponisten[3] in seiner Person vereinigte, ohne damit auf spezifische instrumentale Fertigkeiten anzuspielen.

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[1] Übersetzt nach dem Zitat bei Martin Picker, »A letter of Charles VIII of France concerning Alexander Agricola«, in: *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, hrsg. von Jan LaRue, New York 1966, S. 668f.

[2] Es wird bisweilen sogar soweit gegangen, aufgrund dieser Erwähnung anzunehmen, Agricola habe speziell Saiteninstrumente oder ganz konkret die Laute gespielt: »Given Agricola's apparent fame as a string player (he had been *clarus vocum manuumque*, according to the *Epitaphion*, and wrote several instrumental pieces), it is also possible that

Auch aus obigem Brief ist nicht eindeutig ersichtlich, ob Agricola und der erwähnte Lautenist irgendetwas miteinander zu tun hatten – Agricola sich etwa begleiten ließ oder eine Aufführung mit dem Lautenisten gestaltete.

Andererseits war die Laute bereits während des gesamten 15. Jahrhunderts eines der beliebtesten und verbreitetsten Instrumente, wie eine reiche ikonographische Überlieferung und zahlreiche Nennungen bezeugen; und es war üblich, zeitgenössische Kompositionen darauf umzusetzen, wie man anhand der im späten 15. Jahrhundert einsetzenden Überlieferung von Lautentabulaturen sehen kann.

Auf der Suche nach einem Ansatz für die Verwendung der Laute im Werk Agricolas gerät man schnell an die gehäufte Überlieferung textloser Stücke, die im späten 15. Jahrhundert mit der Generation von Komponisten einsetzt, zu denen auch Agricola zählt, und die immer wieder Anlass zur Diskussion im Hinblick auf ihre Funktion und Besetzung geben: ob als genuine Instrumentalmusik konzipiert, eventuell sogar für ein bestimmtes Ensemble vorgesehen, ob als rein kompositorische Idee veranlagt, ohne eine bestimmte, intendierte Besetzung, für die viele Aufführungsvarianten gleichwertig nebeneinander stehen – oder ob sie überhaupt für Instrumente gedacht waren.

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he had been associated, from an early age, with the Ghent guild of soft-instrument players.« (Rob C. Wegman, »Agricola, Alexander«, in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2. Aufl., Bd. 1, London 2001, S. 225). Jon Banks, der sich ebenfalls auf die eingangs zitierte Passage aus dem Brief Karls VIII. bezieht, rückt die Deutung des Epitaphs in die Nähe des Lautenspiels, indem er mit Bezug auf die Textstelle schreibt: »... (›skilled in voice and hand‹), and though his manual skills may have referred to the organ he was not above keeping company with lutenists.« (Jon Banks, *The Instrumental Consort Repertory of the Late Fifteenth Century*, Aldershot 2006, S. 40).

[3] Dietrich Kämper erwähnt zwar eine Deutung Van der Straetens, der »die Möglichkeit in Betracht zieht, »›clarus ... manuum‹ ziele auf das Niederschreiben der Werke, also auf die kompositorische Tätigkeit ...«, schließt sich dann aber doch Van der Straetens persönlicher Meinung an, die Aussage weise auf Agricola als Lautenisten hin. (Dietrich Kämper, »Instrumentale Stilelemente bei Alexander Agricola«, in: *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 28, 1978, S. 2; dort bezieht er sich auf Edmond van der Straeten, *La musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle*, Bd. 7, Brüssel 1885, Reprint New York 1969, S. 133).

Mittlerweile wird die Festlegung auf eine bestimmte Instrumentierung oder ein festes Ensemble weitgehend umgangen, als praktizierender Musiker muss man sich jedoch mit Besetzungsfragen auseinander setzen und sieht sich immer wieder vor dem Problem bezüglich der Funktion dieser Kompositionen.

An dieser Stelle setzt eine neue Monografie von Jon Banks an. In seinem Buch *The Instrumental Consort Repertory of the Late Fifteenth Century*[4] legt Banks eine detaillierte Argumentationskette dar, in deren Verlauf er bestimmte textlos tradierte Stücke als Instrumentalrepertoire identifiziert, zusammenfasst, nach Genres sortiert, einen Aufführenden- und Rezipientenkreis dafür postuliert sowie eine angenommene instrumentale Besetzung rekonstruiert, für die das Repertoire verfasst worden sein könnte.

In dieses textlose Repertoire finden sowohl Stücke Eingang, die als instrumentale Kompositionen weitgehend anerkannt sind, weil sie weder Textincipits aufweisen, noch mit einer vokalen Gattung identifiziert werden können, sondern auch textlos überlieferte Chansons und Chansonbearbeitungen, also Kompositionen, die in direktem Zusammenhang mit zugrunde liegenden Texten sowie vokaler Konzeption und Aufführung stehen. Banks gliedert dieses Repertoire grob in drei Gruppen:

1. Textlose Chansons, die er auch in Übernahme des Begriffs von Warwick Edwards als »Lieder ohne Worte«[5] bezeichnet. Diese Chansons sind in der Regel parallel zu ihrer textlosen Überlieferung in anderen Quellen auch textiert zu finden und entstammen eindeutig einer vokalen Gattung. Banks hält deren untextierte Niederschrift nicht für eine Art ›unvollständiger‹ Überlieferung, sondern für einen sehr bewussten Schritt.

2. »Res facta«-Kompositionen,[6] die sich auf eine präexistente Melodie einer polyphonen Chanson beziehen und einen neuen, textlosen Kontrapunkt dazu setzen.

3. Freie Neukompositionen, die kein Textincipit besitzen, häufig aber einen motto-ähnlichen Titel aufweisen, und die Banks in seinen ausführlichen Listen in Anlehnung an die frühen Solo-Lauten-Ricercare als »Consort Ricerare« bezeichnet. Es ist schwer, für diese Kompositionen einen geeigneten

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[4] J. Banks, Instrumental Consort (wie Anm. 2) – an dieser Stelle bin ich Nicole Schwindt zu Dank verpflichtet, die mich auf diese wichtige Neuerscheinung hingewiesen hat.

[5] Warwick Edwards, »Songs Without Words by Josquin and his Contemporaries«, in: *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, hrsg. von Iain Fenlon, Cambridge 1981, S. 79–92.

[6] Dieser Begriff wurde ebenfalls von Edwards (ebda., S. 82) auf Grundlage von Johannes Tinctoris' Verwendung des Terminus eingeführt.

Genrebegriff zu finden und sie sind, obwohl sie sich von den anderen Gattungen abheben, schwer unter einer Bezeichnung zusammenzufassen.

Jedes dieser Genres analysiert er im Detail und stellt Repertoirelisten auf, in denen er die einzelnen Kategorien nach weiteren Aspekten der Kompositionen feiner unterteilt und klassifiziert.

Die Tatsache, dass dieses frühe ›Instrumentalrepertoire‹ nicht in Tabulaturen, sondern in Mensuralnotation überliefert ist, veranlasst Banks zu der Annahme, dass die Interpreten zum Kreis der ausgebildeten und gelehrten Sänger gehörten, zu denen auch die Komponisten dieser Stücke zählten und die mit der Notation aus ihrer täglichen Praxis heraus vertraut waren. Als Besetzung schließt er aufgrund von Ikonographie, Status des Instrumentes und vor allem aus dem für das Repertoire erforderlichen Ambitus auf ein Lautenensemble. Dabei geht er vom im 15. Jahrhundert üblichen Plektrumspiel der Laute aus und nimmt daher die einstimmige Verwendung des Instrumentes an, so dass die Aufführenden jeweils eine Stimme der vorliegenden Komposition ausführen konnten.

Er trennt diesen Kreis von auf der Laute gewissermaßen ›nebenberuflich‹ spielenden Sängern deutlich von den professionellen Instrumentalmusikern ab. Letztere sieht Banks als Virtuosen, die in erster Linie ohne Noten, improvisierend ihre Kunst präsentierten und in direkter Nachfolge der mittelalterlichen Menestrels stehen:

> This is not the kind of music that we would expect of a medieval minstrel, whose performing world was essentially monophonic, improvisatory, soloistic and based on memorization rather than notation. Though it is impossible to be sure, the minstrel probably traded extensively on his instrumental virtuosity, and display for its own sake is not a feature of this music; though complex, the difficulties of Agricola's ›Tandernaken‹ demand ensemble discipline rather than individual brilliance ...[7]

Zu dieser Sorte Interpreten würde man wohl die Musiker der professionellen Lauten-Duos des 15. Jahrhunderts rechnen, obgleich sie sich nicht der Einstimmigkeit verschrieben hatten, sondern auf improvisierte Diminutionen über einen gegebenen Tenor spezialisiert waren. Die Besetzung dieser Duos ist gut dokumentiert:[8] in der Regel bestanden sie aus einer Laute und einer Quinterne (einem Oberstimmeninstrument der Lautenfamilie) oder aus zwei Lauten, wobei häufig eine größere und eine kleinere kombiniert wurden. Der Spieler des größeren Instruments hatte dabei die Funktion des »Tenorista«, der das Fundament der Komposition lieferte – was neben schlichtem Halten der Tenorlinie auch eine Einrichtung von Tenor und Contratenor bedeutet haben könnte[9] –, während der andere Lautenist Diminutionen auf die Oberstimme extemporierte. Diese Oberstimmenimprovisationen konnten offenbar sehr virtuose Formen annehmen, wie zeitgenössische Beschreibungen festhalten. Besonders der Lautenist Pietrobono muss mit solchem Spiel seine Zeitgenossen begeistert haben. Aurelio Brandolini beschreibt in seinen Lobversen auf den Lautenisten dessen Spiel:

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[7] J. Banks, Instrumental Consort (wie Anm. 2), S. 40.

[8] Siehe dazu vor allem Martin Kirnbauer, »Petrucci in the Fifteenth Century: The Lute Duos«, in: *Venezia 1501. Petrucci e la stampa musicale. Atti del convegno internazionale Venezia ... 2001*, hrsg. von Giulio Cattin und Patrizia Dalla Vecchia, Venedig 2005 (Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 3.B.6), S. 591–607, und Vladimir Ivanoff, »Das Lautenduo im 15. Jahrhundert«, in: *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 8 (1984), S. 147–162.

> Staune gebannt, wie seine linke Hand die gesamte Laute entlangläuft, wie seine Hand schnell über die klangvollen Saiten gleitet. Du wirst bewundern, wie alle seine Finger gleichzeitig fliegen, wie eine Hand an so vielen Orten zugleich sein kann. Bald stürmt sie in die höchsten Lagen, bald läuft sie bis zu den tiefsten Tönen. ... Und es gibt keine Hoffnung auf Rast, weder für Plektrum noch für Finger gibt es eine Pause, bis das Lied beendet ist.[10]

Leider sind Beispiele dieser Ensemblepraxis so gut wie nicht überliefert, was vor allem bei der improvisierten Oberstimme gewissermaßen in der Natur der Sache liegt. Die einzigen Überlieferungen, die einigermaßen an die Beschreibungen herankommen könnten, sind die sechs Intavolierungen für zwei Lauten in Francesco Spinacinos Tabulaturen von 1507.[11]

Sie wirken in vielerlei Hinsicht außergewöhnlich und unterscheiden sich deutlich von anderen verzierten Kompositionen dieser Zeit, die sich normalerweise auch bei Diminutionen im Rahmen traditioneller kontrapunktischer Techniken bewegen. Während bei Spinacino die Tenor-Laute die Unterstimmen der vorgegebenen Kompositionen in rhythmisch vereinfachter Form und stetig pulsierendem Rhythmus präsentiert, scheint der primäre Zweck der diminuierten Oberstimme darin zu liegen, den vollen Tonumfang der Laute auszunutzen und in konstanter Bewegung zu bleiben. Kadenzen des

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[9] Fallows wies bereits darauf hin, dass der Tenorista im Lautenduo wahrscheinlich die beiden Unterstimmen dreistimmiger Chansons für sein Instrument zusammenlegte. (David Fallows, »15th-century Tablatures for Plucked Instruments: A Summary, a Revision and a Suggestion«, in: *The Lute Society Journal* 19 (1977), S. 7–33.

[10] Aurelio Brandolini, *Libellus de Laudibus musicae et Petroboni* (Ms., 1473), Kap. 3, Verse 79–84 und 99f.; übersetzt nach dem Zitat bei F. Alberto Gallo, Music in the Castle. Troubadours, Books, and Orators in Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries, Chicago 1995, S. 123f.

[11] Francesco Spinacino, *Intabulatura de lauto. Libro primo*, Venedig: Ottaviano Petrucci 1507, RISM 1507^{5}, fol. 12^{r}–25^{v}, und [...] *Libro secondo* [...] RISM 1507^{6}, fol. 38^{v}–41^{r}, Reprint hrsg. von François Lesure, Genf 1978.

Originals werden zwar in der Regel beachtet, ansonsten entfernt sich die diminuierende Stimme aber sehr weit vom Original und gewinnt eine Eigendynamik in Skalenläufen und kleinen Figuren, die sich über eine Harmonie mit den Unterstimmen oft hinwegsetzt. Der Verschriftlichungsprozess dieser eigentlich schriftlosen Kunst kann nicht ohne Verluste vonstatten gegangen sein. Ohne sie folglich allzu wörtlich zu nehmen, können sie dennoch einen prinzipiellen Eindruck davon geben, wie Bearbeitungen im Lautenduo des 15. Jahrhunderts ausgesehen haben.[12]

Somit unterscheidet sich sowohl das Repertoire als auch sein Interpretenkreis deutlich vom Lautenensemble, das Banks für sein »Consort Repertory« annimmt. Allein die Tatsache, dass eine Niederschrift für diese Kompositionen erfolgte, wäre damit ein weiterer Hinweis auf die Besonderheit des Repertoires in einem Umfeld, in dem instrumentales Repertoire generell individuell und schriftlos war.

Die Instrumentierung dieser Kompositionen mit Violen- und anderen Consorts, die sich für das Repertoire ebenfalls hervorragend eignen, war gemäß Banks erst ein zweiter Schritt, der auf die Etablierung des Repertoires für Lautenensemble folgte. Das Lautenensemble bereitete gewissermaßen anderen homogenen Instrumentenensembles, für die dann schließlich eigene Repertoires geschaffen wurden, den Weg.[13]

So rund die Argumentation wirkt, so plausibel das Ergebnis klingt und so schmeichelhaft es für einen Lautenisten auch erscheinen mag, ein gesamtes, frühes Lautenrepertoire zugeschrieben zu bekommen, so bleibt man doch gewahr, dass dieses Argumentationsgebäude Banks' letztlich auf Indizienbeweisen fußt.

Ein Eckpfeiler seiner Beweisführung ist die angenommene, einstimmige Verwendung der Laute im 15. Jahrhundert als Plektruminstrument, die es ermöglicht, dass einzelne Linien mit hohem Ambitus in einem komplexen polyphonen Gerüst auch von ›guten Laien‹ ausgeführt werden können.

Die vielen Abbildungen dieser Zeit zeigen, was die Anschlagstechnik angeht, zwar, dass die Laute im 15. Jahrhundert noch vornehmlich mit dem Plektrum gespielt wurde – auch zahlreiche Nennungen von Plektrumlautenisten, darunter besagter Pietrobono, belegen den Augenschein. Erst zum Ende des Jahrhunderts häufen sich die Darstellungen merklich, die ein Fingerspiel zeigen, bis schließlich Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts das Fingerspiel laut Ikonographie überwiegt. Dabei kann kein radikaler Wechsel von einer zur anderen Spielweise festgestellt werden, denn auch das Plektrumspiel hielt sich noch bis weit ins 16. Jahrhundert.[14]

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[12] Siehe dazu M. Kirnbauer, Petrucci (wie Anm. 8), S. 602f.

[13] Siehe dazu J. Banks, Instrumental Consort (wie Anm. 2), S. 35.

Eine Annahme, die man seit Beginn der wissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit mittelalterlichem Lautenspiel bis hin zu Banks' Monografie fast ohne Widerspruch immer wieder antrifft, ist aber, dass Plektrumspiel auf der Laute mit einstimmigem Spiel gleichzusetzen sei. Von der Anreißtechnik kann jedoch nicht auf ein- oder mehrstimmiges Spiel geschlossen werden, denn entgegen der verbreiteten Meinung, dass die Plektrumlaute allein für monophone Linien verwandt wurde und erst die mit Fingern gezupfte Laute Mehrstimmigkeit auf dem Instrument gestattete, ist es sehr wohl möglich, polyphon – und dabei auch virtuos – auf der Plektrumlaute zu spielen.[15] Der

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[14] Noch 1523 findet sich die Erwähnung von Plektrumspiel im Lautenensemble. Siehe J. Banks, Instrumental Consort (wie Anm. 2), S. 46.

[15] So wird zum Beispiel bei der Erwägung von Besetzungen für die Intavolierungen im Codex Faenza Folgendes festgestellt: »Let us consider first the possibility of performing both parts on a single instrument. Lute can immediately be eliminated because although it possessed the necessary range, it was not played polyphonically before the late 15th century. Until then a plectrum was used, precluding the performance of more than one line« (Timothy J. McGee, »Instruments and the Faenza Codex«, in: *Early Music* 14, 1986, S. 482). Zwar wird polyphones Lautenspiel von McGee für das Repertoire im späten 15. Jahrhundert in Aussicht gestellt, aber allein unter der Vorgabe, dass dann bereits mit Fingern an Stelle des Plektrums gespielt wurde. Eine solistische Ausführung von Intavolierungen im Stile des Codex Faenza mit der Plektrumlaute ist aber auf jeden Fall möglich. Eventuell würde ein Interpret einzelne Stellen verändern, seiner individuellen Technik anpassen oder vereinfachen wollen, im Prinzip stellt die Mehrstimmigkeit solcher Quellen für den versierten Plektrumspieler aber kein Hindernis dar. Ob diese Musik auch im 15. Jahrhundert solistisch von Plektrumspielern aufgeführt wurde, kann nicht mit Sicherheit gesagt werden, einen physikalischen Hinderungsgrund kann man aber nicht annehmen. Weitere Beispiele in der Sekundärliteratur finden sich bei Roland Eberlein, »The Faenza Codex: music for organ or for lute duet?«, in: *Early Music* 20 (1992), S. 461f., wo er die Thesen McGees zu widerlegen sucht, die Annahme McGees über das einstimmige Plektrumspiel aber wiederholt und bestärkt: »... lutes were not played polyphonically before the late 15th century«, ferner Howard Mayer Brown, »Instruments«, in: *Performance Practice. Music Before 1600*, hrsg. von dems. und Stanley Sadie, New York 1989, S. 175: »The new technique [mit Fingern] enabled performers to play polyphonic music on their instruments«, und Keith Polk (*German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages. Players, Patrons and Performance Practice*, Cambridge 1992, S. 218f., Anm. 42), der ebenfalls von einstimmigem Plektrumspiel ausgeht, findet die Vorstellung, dass ein Plektrumspieler auch Polyphonie umsetzen könnte, immer noch »intriguing«. Obwohl Crawford Young die Möglichkeit mehrstimmigen Spiels mit der Plektrumlaute aus der Erfahrung eines Lautenisten heraus bespricht (»Lute, Gittern, & Citole«, in: *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, hrsg. von Ross W. Duffin, Bloomington 2000, S. 363), geht auch Banks (Instrumental Consort, wie Anm. 2, S. 32) noch von der oben erwähnten Gleichsetzung aus: »The fact that fifteenth-century lutenists had been essentially plectrum players shows that

Einsatz von Bünden ab 1400 wurde in der Vergangenheit bereits als Argument für das mehrstimmige Spiel auf der Plektrumlaute angeführt.[16] Dem ungeachtet kann die Wahl der Anschlagstechnik ebenso wie die Entscheidung für den Einsatz von Bünden durchaus andere Gründe gehabt haben. Beispielsweise könnten eine veränderte Klangästhetik[17] oder persönliche Spielpräferenzen des jeweiligen Musikers ausschlaggebend gewesen sein, so dass diese Faktoren nicht notwendigerweise die ein- oder mehrstimmige Verwendung des Instrumentes belegen.

Es werden im 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert zwar Lautenensembles mit bis zu vier Spielern erwähnt,[18] die offenbar Plektren benutzten und dann wahrscheinlich Einzellinien übernahmen, und auch die Improvisationskunst Pietrobonos über einen Tenor wird einstimmig vonstatten gegangen sein, aber schon die Aufgabe des ihn begleitenden Tenorista könnte hier vielfältiger gewesen sein, als seine Funktionsbezeichnung anzudeuten scheint: Die oben erwähnte Möglichkeit der Intavolierung und Zusammenlegung von Tenor und Contratenor in ein Instrument ist sehr naheliegend, vor allem wenn der Contratenor eher füllende Funktion hat.

Die einzigen überlieferten Tabulaturen, die sich auf die Praxis des professionellen Lautenensembles im Stile Pietrobonos beziehen könnten – die besagten sechs Lautenduos in den Tabulaturdrucken von Spinacino – bestätigen dieses Vorgehen:[19] Für die begleitende ›Tenorlaute‹ wurden die Unterstimmen der zugrunde liegenden Chansonsätze (in einem Fall einer untextierten Komposition) in ein Instrument zusammengelegt, während die Oberstimme sich in freien, diminuierenden Läufen darüber einstimmig ergeht. Zwar hat man zur Zeit von Spinacinos Druck die Laute bereits auch mit Fingern gespielt, aber diese Lautenduos weisen in ihrer Charakteristik eindeutig auf eine Praxis des 15. Jahrhunderts zurück – und wie oben bereits dargelegt, bereiten die Unterstimmenintavolierungen von Spinacino für einen Plektrumspieler keine Probleme.

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it was essentially a monophonic rather than polyphonic instrument, in other words one that played single lines of the type found with such large ranges here.«

[16] Siehe V. Ivanoff, Das Lautenduo (wie Anm. 8), S. 154.

[17] Es gibt Hinweise darauf, dass die Bünde der Laute eventuell dazu eingesetzt wurden, einen »Schnarrklang« zu erzeugen, wie er bei der Harfe im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert üblich war. Da dieses Feld aber bislang weder ausgiebig recherchiert noch erprobt wurde, muss hier weitere Forschung für klarere Aussagen abgewartet werden.

[18] Siehe dazu das Kapitel »The lute consort«, in: J. Banks, Instrumental Consort (wie Anm. 2), S. 36–40.

[19] Siehe dazu M. Kirnbauer, Petrucci (wie Anm. 8).

Dass sich die Plektrumlaute auch für das Spiel einzelner Linien eignet, ist unumstritten und bietet sich dabei besonders für die Umsetzung diminuierter Stimmen an. Es trifft sicher ferner zu, dass das Plektrumspiel ursprünglich einer tendenziell einstimmigen Tradition entstammt, während das spätere Fingerspiel eher vertikale Strukturen begünstigt. Beide Techniken und Anwendungsbereiche stellen aber Extreme dar, die an den Endpunkten einer Entwicklung stehen – dazwischen erstreckt sich ein langer Zeitraum, der einstimmiges Spiel mit Fingern ebenso plausibel erscheinen lässt wie Mehrstimmigkeit mit Plektrum. Und somit widerlegt diese Feststellung auch nicht die Argumentation von Banks zugunsten eines Lautenensembles mit monophon spielenden Interpreten, erweitert aber die Möglichkeiten des Lauteneinsatzes gewaltig: Spieltechniken und Prinzipien der Umsetzung auf der Laute sind für diese Epoche nicht auf nur eine Praxis reduzierbar.

Diese Fülle an Möglichkeiten birgt ein großes Potenzial: Es steht uns bei der Ausführung von Musik im späten 15. Jahrhundert auf der Laute eine Vielfalt an Techniken zur Verfügung, mit denen wir experimentieren und sie in Aufführungen verwenden können.

Ziel des Beitrags ist es daher nicht, eine ›richtige‹ Besetzung für die textlosen Kompositionen Agricolas zu finden, sondern Wege aufzuzeigen, wie ein Lautenist das vorliegende Repertoire, gleich ob textiert oder untextiert, sinnvoll auf der Laute realisieren kann.[20]

Einsatz der Laute als einstimmiges Ensembleinstrument

Eine Möglichkeit für die Instrumentierung wäre der Einsatz einer oder mehrerer einstimmig gespielter Lauten innerhalb eines klanglich homogenen Ensembles, also einer Besetzung, die aus Instrumenten ähnlicher, wenn nicht gar gleicher Tonerzeugung besteht.

Zunächst käme dafür das von Banks postulierte Lautenensemble in Frage, das als Konstellation belegt ist und sinnvolle Ergebnisse verspricht. Bei Besetzung aller Stimmen mit Lauten, also mit einem sehr hohen Grad an Klangverschmelzung, kann es aber mitunter schwer werden, einzelnen Stimmführungen zu folgen. Je nachdem welche Charakteristika der Komposition oder der Instrumente die Aufführenden hervorheben möchten, kann dieses Ergebnis entweder gewünscht sein, oder sich durch Bearbeitung der Einzellinien beheben lassen – beispielsweise durch den Einsatz von Verzierungen und Tonaufspaltungen, kurzum durch instrumentengerechte Arrangements.

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[20] Dabei stütze ich mich neben eigenen vor allem auf die langjährigen Erfahrungen, die an der Mittelalterabteilung der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis und im Besonderen von Crawford Young zu diesem Thema gesammelt wurden.

Ein typischer Fall für die Notwendigkeit instrumentenspezifischer Eingriffe sind die in diesen Kompositionen häufig auftretenden langen Töne: Bei Besetzung mit nicht-gestrichenen Saiteninstrumenten sind lang ausgehaltene Töne schwer darstellbar, weil der angeschlagene oder gezupfte Ton schnell verklingt. Dadurch wird einerseits die betreffende Note als Kontrapunkt zu eventuell gleichzeitig erklingenden, bewegteren Stimmen weniger gut wahrgenommen, andererseits verliert der Hörer leicht den linearen Zusammenhang einer Stimme.

Diese Beobachtungen müssen nicht zwingend in die Schlussfolgerung münden, eine Komposition oder eine Stimme innerhalb einer Komposition, die solche langen Töne enthält, sei generell ungeeignet für das Spiel auf der Laute; noch müssen sie zu der Feststellung führen, diese Stimme wäre für eine explizite Besetzung geschrieben worden. Für den Zupfer gibt es die Möglichkeit der Tonwiederholung, die auch praktisch angewandt wurde, wie man am Beispiel der Unterstimmenintavolierungen der Spinacino-Duos sehen kann (siehe Notenbeispiel 1).

Ferner ist ein Auffüllen durch Verzierungen oder kleine Figuren möglich. Je weiter man diese instrumententypischen Bearbeitungen treibt, in die sicherlich auch die Erfahrungen und technischen Fertigkeiten des jeweiligen Spielers eingehen können und zum Teil von erfahrenen Spielern ohne große Überlegungen automatisch vorgenommen werden, desto näher gerät man dabei in den Bereich der wirklichen Instrumentalbearbeitung, der Intavolierung.

Weitere Lösungen für einen zu gleichartigen Klang der einzelnen Stimmen wären Experimente mit Tonfärbungen auf dem Instrument oder die Besetzung mit Instrumenten ähnlicher, aber nicht identischer Tonerzeugung.[21] Diese Parameter sind mit den oben genannten Ideen zu instrumentenspezifischen Bearbeitungen frei kombinierbar.

Notenbeispiel 1 (auf der folgenden Seite): anonym, »J'ay pris amour« (Anfang), oben: Lautenversion nach Spinacino 1507, unten: Vorlage nach dem Chansonnier Nivelle de la Chaussée, F-Pn, Rés. Vmc 57, fol. 71^{v}–72^{r}

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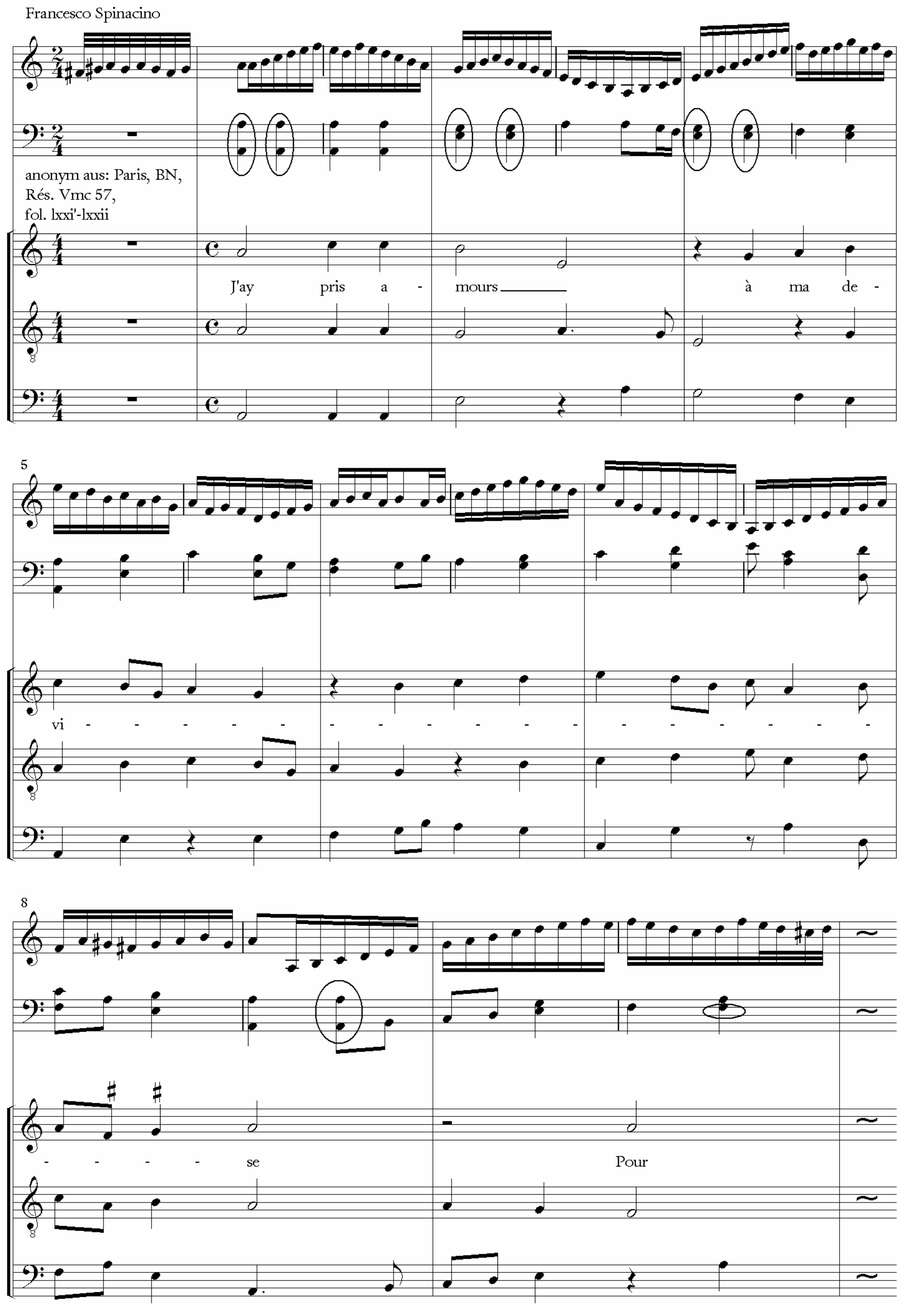
[21] Ein solcher Besetzungsversuch am Beispiel von Agricolas *Pater meus agricola est* mit Chekker (einem frühen Tastenintrument), Dulcemelos (einer Form des mittelalterlichen Hackbretts) und Quinterne zeigte: Der Chekker mit mechanisch angezupften Metallsaiten, das Dulcemelos mit durch Klöppel angeschlagenen Metallsaiten und die Quinterne mit plektrumgezupften Darmsaiten sind sich im Klang ähnlich genug, um als homogen wahrgenommen zu werden, die Klangerzeugung ist aber noch ausreichend unterschiedlich, um einzelne Stimmführungen deutlicher hervorzuheben.


Francesco Spinacino
anonym aus: Paris, BN, Rés. Vmc 57, fol. lxxi'-lxxii
J'ay pris a - mours à ma de -
5
vi - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
8
- - - - se
Pour

Außerdem besteht natürlich die Möglichkeit, eine Laute in einem gemischten Ensemble einstimmig zu spielen – wobei »gemischt« hier eine Besetzung meint, die Instrumente verschiedener Klangerzeugung und vor allem Klangfarbe vereint, beispielsweise Bläser, Streicher und Zupfer – aber natürlich auch Sänger. In einer solchen Besetzung bietet es sich an, die Laute mit einem Plektrum zu spielen, was sie perkussiver und durchsetzungsfähiger macht – gerade bei kräftigem Streicherklang oder Einsatz einer Harfe mit Schnarrhaken kann dies gewährleisten, dass die Laute akustisch nicht ›untergeht‹. Trotz dieser Maßnahme wird aber eine einstimmig geführte Laute gegenüber zum Beispiel Streichern in der Regel nicht als gleichberechtigt, sondern hierarchisch untergeordnet wahrgenommen. Was bei einem burgundischen Kantilenensatz noch gut funktioniert, wo Stimmfunktionen klarer getrennt sind, kann bei manchen Kompositionen aus Agricolas Generation zu einer ungewollten Betonung einer Stimme auf Kosten anderer führen.[22]

Von daher gilt das übliche Verfahren, die Wahl der Besetzung eng an der Satzkonstruktion der gewählten Komposition zu orientieren, für dieses Repertoire in besonderem Maße. Der Tenor des *De tous biens plaine* II[23] etwa (siehe Notenbeispiel 2) ließe sich passend mit einem Instrument besetzen, das liegende Töne für den gedehnten Cantus firmus zur Verfügung stellen kann, während die rastlosen Außenstimmen gut von Zupfern gespielt werden können. Gleiches gilt für das zweistimmige *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino* (siehe Notenbeispiel 3) mit ruhigem Tenor und bewegter Oberstimme, das in gemischten Besetzungen gut funktionieren kann.[24]

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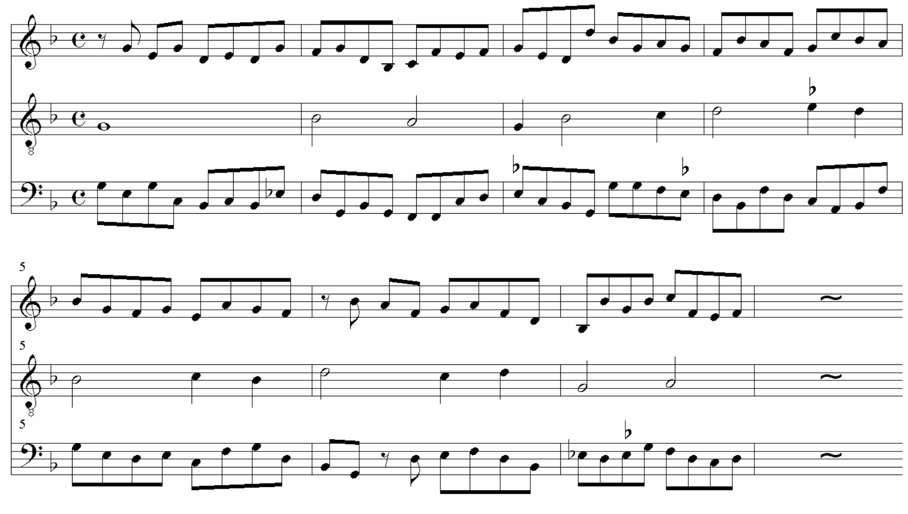
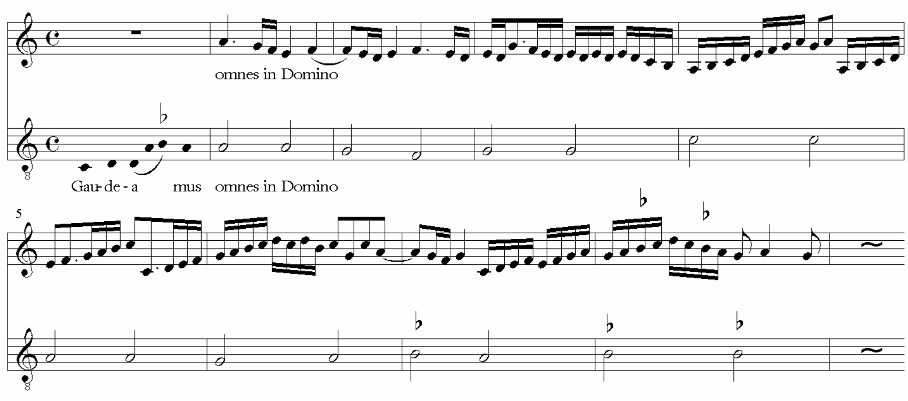
[22] Eine experimentelle Besetzung für Agricolas *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* im gemischten Ensemble (in diesem Fall besetzt mit Dulcemelos, Blockflöte und Laute) führte diesen Aspekt vor Augen: Als Ausführende stellten wir fest, dass wir den Satz sehr wohl mit gleichberechtigten Stimmen hörten und deren Interaktion nachvollziehen konnten. Die Wahrnehmung Außenstehender aber, beispielsweise beim Vorspiel oder im Konzert, war eine deutlich andere: durch den Einsatz der Flöte im Cantus wurde die Komposition als Oberstimmensatz wahrgenommen, begleitet durch zwei Saiteninstrumente in den Unterstimmen.

[23] Zu allen Sätzen siehe die Ausgabe *Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia*, hrsg. von Edward R. Lerner, Bd. 5*: Cantiones, Musica Instrumentalis, Opera dubia*, American Institute of Musicocogy 1970 (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 22.5).

[24] Bei diesen konkreten Besetzungsvorschlägen handelt es sich lediglich um Ideen, die im Experiment ausprobiert wurden und zu den genannten Beobachtungen führten. Sie erheben keinen Anspruch auf Absolutheit – ein Hörer des 15. Jahrhunderts mag die formulierten Zusammenhänge ganz anders wahrgenommen haben.



Notenbeispiel 2: A. Agricola, *De tous biens plaine* II (Anfang)



Notenbeispiel 3: A. Agricola, *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino* (Anfang)

Einsatz der Laute als Soloinstrument

Eine weitere, recht offensichtliche Möglichkeit für den Einsatz der Laute ist die Solobearbeitung. Mit dem Beginn der Überlieferung von Lautentabulaturen im späten 15. Jahrhundert haben wir einen klaren Anhaltspunkt für einen zeitgenössischen Umgang mit der Laute.

Dabei sind die überlieferten Tabulaturen freilich nicht mehr als ein Echo auf eine Praxis der schriftlosen Lautenbearbeitung, die vor allem von professionellen Spielern angewandt wurde und ihren Weg in die Schriftlichkeit nur in Ausnahmefällen fand. Die Verbreitung der Lautentabulatur hängt vermutlich stark mit einem Bedarf seitens wohlhabender, dilettierender Lautenisten zusammen – wobei »dilettierend« im besten Sinne des Wortes zu verstehen ist und im Gegensatz zu den professionellen Spielern steht, die auf Tabulaturen generell nicht angewiesen waren. Von daher können diese Fassungen nur Hinweise geben, wie Kompositionen in Lautenbearbeitungen umgewandelt wurden, denn sie wurden ja in erster Linie für Laien hergestellt und nicht immer von Fachleuten. Ferner kann man davon ausgehen, dass nicht jeder Berufslautenist seine persönlichen Bearbeitungen einer breiten Öffentlichkeit preisgeben wollte, dass eventuell Veränderungen oder Vereinfachungen für die Drucklegung vorgenommen wurden und in vielen Fällen auch die Notationsmethoden zur Darstellung des eigentlich Gemeinten nicht ausgereicht haben werden – was auch die oft fehlenden rhythmischen Zeichen der frühen Tabulaturhandschriften erklären könnte.[25]

In drei frühen Quellen des 16. Jahrhunderts finden sich Lautenintavolierungen von Stücken Alexander Agricolas. Bemerkenswert ist dabei, dass sich fast alle Genres unter den Bearbeitungen finden – neben textlosen Vorbildern auch Chansons und Motetten –, so dass sich keine Bevorzugung eines Genres gegenüber einem anderen für die Lautenbearbeitung erkennen lässt.

Francesco Spinacino (1507)[26] – 8 Stücke in italienischer Tabulatur:[27]
Come feme
Tandernaken
Leure et venue
Alé regretz
Si dedero
L'Ome bani
Si fays viey (= »Se je fais bien«)
La Mignonne

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[25] Siehe dazu M. Kirnbauer, Petrucci (wie Anm. 8), S. 602f.

[26] Francesco Spinacino, Intabulatura I und II (wie Anm. 11). Die Reihenfolge der Titel ist nach ihrer Abfolge in den Quellen sortiert.

[27] Alle Tabulaturen sind in den Drucken Spinacinos ohne Autorangaben wiedergegeben.

Vincenzo Capirola (1517)[28] – 2 Stücke in italienischer Tabulatur:[29]
Oblivier (= *Oublier vueil tristesse*)
Si dedero

Hans Neusidler (1536a)[30] – 1 Stück in deutscher Tabulatur:
Alexander agricola (= *Cecus non judicat de coloribus*)
[*Ander nacken up dem Rhin*][31]

Hans Neusidler (1536b)[32] – 3 Stücke in deutscher Tabulatur:
Jay vien ahur
[*Ave sanctissima*][33]
[*Ander nacken up dem Rhin*][34]
Alexander agricola (= *Cecus non judicat de coloribus*)
Si dedero[35]

Die drei vorliegenden Tabulatursammlungen entstammen völlig unterschiedlichen Zusammenhängen und wurden für sehr verschiedene Zwecke geschaffen:

Im ersten überlieferten Tabulaturdruck, den beiden Lautenbüchern des Francesco Spinacino, die 1507 bei Petrucci in Venedig verlegt wurden, finden sich acht Bearbeitungen von Kompositionen Agricolas. Betrachtet man unter diesen Fassungen zum Beispiel das *Alé regretz* genauer, so wird deutlich, dass diese Intavolierung einen Kundenkreis von interessierten Laien überfordert haben dürfte. Spinacino wählte bei seiner Bearbeitung auf der Laute eine sehr hohe Transposition, die den Spieler ohne Not in extreme Lagen zwingt: weder der Ambitus noch die Darstellbarkeit des Kontrapunktes im Fingersatz erfordern diese Transposition. Setzt man das Stück tiefer, so ergeben sich für den Spieler wesentlich angenehmere Positionen, ohne dass die transparente Stimmführung zu leiden hätte. Ähnliches gilt für die *Tandernaken*-Bearbeitung, ein Stück, das schon im Ensemblespiel eine Herausforderung darstellt: die Solo-Lautenfassung verlangt dem Spieler Enormes ab – Aufwand und Effekt halten sich hier kaum die Waage.

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[28] US–Cn, Case MS VM C.25. Die Handschrift mit dem Titel *Compositione di meser Vincenzo Capirola, gentil homo bresano* wurde etwa 1517 von einem Schüler Capirolas namens Vidal hergestellt, Reprint-Ausgabe Florenz 1981 (Archivum musicum. Collana di testi rari, 39).

[29] Auch in der Capirola-Handschrift finden sich generell keine Autorangaben.

[30] Hans Neusidler, *Ein newgeordent künstlich Lautenbuch in zwen Theyl getheylt: der erst* ..., Nürnberg: Johann Petreius 1536 (RISM 1536^{12}). Reprint-Ausgaben Neuss 1974 (Institutio pro arte testudinis, A.1) und Stuttgart 2004 (Faksimile-Edition Laute, 6).

[31] Implizit über die Zuordnung in 1536b fälschlicherweise Agricola zugeschrieben.

[32] Hans Neusidler, *Der ander Theil des Lautenbuchs*, Nürnberg: Johann Petreius 1536 (RISM 1536^{13}), Reprint-Ausgabe Neuss 1974 (Institutio pro arte testudinis, A.3). In den Drucken Neusidlers, besonders in 1536b, wird die Autorzuordnung fast zum Prinzip erhoben.

[33] Vermutlich fälschlicherweise Agricola zugeschrieben.

[34] Vermutlich fälschlicherweise Agricola zugeschrieben.

[35] Von Neusidler fälschlicherweise Jacob Obrecht zugeschrieben.

Auch die Fingersätze, die Spinacino sowohl in seinen Intavolierungen für Sololaute wie auch in den Oberstimmen seiner Duos vorgibt, wirken zum Teil recht exzentrisch – man fragt sich oft, warum er bestimmte Figuren nicht günstiger legte. Der Unterstützung von Stimmführungen sind diese Entscheidungen zumeist jedenfalls nicht geschuldet. Abgesehen davon, dass Fingersätze sehr von der individuellen Technik und den Gewohnheiten des jeweiligen Spielers abhängig sind, erscheinen Spinacinos Sätze dennoch außergewöhnlich.

Von daher stellt sich die Frage, wie diese Notentexte entstanden, und wie wörtlich sie zu nehmen sind.

Möglicherweise wurden die Intavolierungen relativ kurzfristig erstellt, da Petrucci unter erheblichem Druck stand, eine Tabulatur herauszugeben, um sein bis dahin nicht wahrgenommenes und inzwischen angefochtenes Privileg zu verteidigen.[36] Eventuell wurden die Bearbeitungen dann in Ermangelung eines geübten Intavolierers unter Zeitdruck von jemandem vorgenommen, der es lediglich verstand, ein Notationssystem in ein anderes zu übertragen – eine mensural notierte Vorlage in eine Tabulatur –, der aber vielleicht selbst keine große Praxis im Lautenspiel besaß. Die Folge wären Tabulaturen, die eher mechanisch als aus musikalischer Erfahrung heraus entstanden.[37] In ihrer Anlage gleichen diese Drucke sehr den textlosen Chansonniers, die Petrucci ebenfalls herausgegeben hatte. Möglicherweise sind sie nach ähnlichem Muster entstanden und sollten wohl auch, wie die Chansonniers, berühmte Kompositionen enthalten, um für gute Verkaufszahlen zu sorgen.[38]

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[36] Siehe dazu in der Einleitung zur Edition: *Compositione di Meser Vincenzo Capirola. Lute-Book (circa 1517)* hrsg. von Otto Gombosi, Neuilly-sur-Seine 1955 (Publications de la Société de Musique d'autrefois. Textes musicaux, 1), S. XXIX.

[37] An dieser Stelle möchte ich mich herzlich bei Martin Kirnbauer bedanken, der einige dieser Ideen im Gespräch vorbrachte.

[38] Banks meint in diesem Zusammenhang: »In terms of repertory and layout, the Spinacino tablatures are essentially textless chansonniers«, und stellt die Tabulaturen in dieser Hinsicht in eine Reihe mit *Odhecaton*, *Canti B*, *Canti C*, aber auch solchen handschriftlichen Quellen wie dem *Basevi*-Codex (J. Banks, Instrumental Consort, wie Anm. 2, S. 31). Und Gombosi stellt fest: »Of the 54 transcriptions contained in Spinacino's two books not less than 44 are taken from them [Petruccis vorangegangenen Drucken], mostly from the Odhecaton (29) and Canti C (10)« (O. Gombosi, Compositione, wie Anm. 32, S. XXIX).

Capirolas Handschrift hingegen war offensichtlich nicht für den kommerziellen Markt gedacht: Während die Intavolierungen von Spinacino noch viele Fragen aufwerfen, mitunter, weil über seine Person außerhalb der beiden Drucke praktisch nichts bekannt ist, so entstammen die ca. zehn Jahre später, gegen 1517 niedergeschriebenen Tabulaturen des Vincenzo Capirola, unter denen sich auch zwei Agricola-Kompositionen befinden, nachweisbar einer lautenistischen Praxis und dem kreativen Spannungsfeld zwischen einem etablierten Virtuosen und Lehrer und seinen Schülern.[39] Einer von ihnen legte, wie das Vorwort verrät, die Kompositionen und Intavolierungen seines Mentors in dieser prachtvollen Tabulaturhandschrift nieder.[40] Auch die Art, wie die Vorlagen für das Spiel auf der Laute umgesetzt wurden, lässt intensive Beschäftigung mit dem Instrument und idiomatische Wendungen erkennen – die Lage ist in der Regel nicht so hoch gewählt wie bei Spinacino, und der spieltechnische Anspruch liegt eher im Bereich instrumentenspezifischer Virtuosität als im ›Kampf‹ mit Lage und Transposition. Zwar sind diese Aspekte absolut gesehen sehr subjektiv und würden von Spieler zu Spieler unterschiedlich beurteilt werden, im relativen Vergleich mit den Tabulaturen Spinacinos lassen sich die erwähnten Beobachtungen aber zumindest als Tendenzen feststellen.

Die dritte Tabulatursammlung, die einzelne Stücke Agricolas enthält, sind die beiden Bände des 1536 im Druck erschienenen *Newgeordent künstlich Lautenbuch* des Hans Neusidler. Schon aus den Untertiteln zu den Bänden ist ersichtlich, dass die Anlage dieser zwei zusammenhängenden Drucke einem didaktischen Gesamtkonzept unterworfen ist: *Der erst* [Teil] *für die anfahenden Schuler / die aus rechter kunst vnd grundt nach der Tabulatur / sich one einichen Meyster darin zuüben haben* ...[41] und *Der ander theil des Lautenbůchs. Darin sind begriffen / vil außerlesner kunstreycher stuck ... für die geübten vnnd erfarnen diser kunst* ...[42]

Während bei Spinacino die Beweggründe für den Tabulaturdruck noch vage bleiben, lässt Neusidler durch ausführliche Vorworte und Beischriften zu einzelnen Stücken keinen Zweifel an seiner Motivation und dem Zweck der Intavolierungen: Sein Druck ist klar auf einen Käuferkreis zugeschnitten, und Neusidler versäumt auch keine Gelegenheit, sein Produkt entsprechend anzupreisen. Das erste Buch ist fast wie ein Lauten-Kurs aufgebaut und beginnt mit Erläuterungen für den Anfänger zu Besaitung, Stimmung und Haltung der Laute sowie Erklärungen zu Tabulatur und Fingersätzen. Sodann folgen einfache Übungen zur Ausbildung der Finger und des Tabulaturlesens, bis schließlich an die Intavolierungen gegangen wird, die mit sehr schlichten, zweistimmigen Bearbeitungen anfangen und schließlich zu den dreistimmigen fortschreiten – jeweils zunächst mit ausnotiertem Fingersatz, später nur noch mit Hilfen für besondere Stellen. Der zweite Band enthält eine Materialsammlung für den fortgeschrittenen Lautenisten mit dreistimmigen Intavolierungen, die Neusidler zusätzlich »nach Lutanistischer vnd auch Organistischer art [gesetzt]«,[43] das heißt »mit leufflein vnd Coloraturen gezyret«,[44] kurzum instrumentenspezifisch arrangiert hat.

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[39] »Intabulated vocal compositions in Petrucci's prints [für die Laute] are limited by considerations for the dilettante. ... Capirola goes far beyond the standards of Spinacino« (O. Gombosi, ebda.).

[40] »I, Vitale, considering that many divine works have been lost through ignorance of their owners, and wishing that this quasi divine book I have written should perpetually be preserved, have decided to ornament it with such noble pictures that if it comes in the hands of one who is lacking such understanding, he will preserve it for the beauty of the pictures.« (Übersetzung nach O. Gombosi, ebda., S. XC).

[41] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536a (wie Anm. 26), fol. a i^r.

[42] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536b (wie Anm. 28), fol. A i^r.

In seinen beiden Lautenbüchern finden sich dabei etliche Stücke in mehrfachen Bearbeitungen, zum Beispiel im Schülerbuch einmal in zweistimmiger, später in dreistimmiger Fassung und gelegentlich im zweiten Buch dann nochmals in dreistimmiger, aber stark verzierter Version. Diese Verfahrensweise, obwohl bei Neusidler aus eindeutig didaktischen Motiven eingesetzt, scheint einer Aufführungspraxis entnommen zu sein, die in Hans Gerles *Tabulatur auf die Laudten* von 1533 in der Beschreibung von Adolf Blindhamers Spiel bestätigt wird:

> ... so er zu einem gesatzten stücklein gegriffen / hat er das erstlich / wie es in noten gestanden / mit wenig Coloraturen / zum andern mit wolgestelten leuflein geziert / vnd zum dritten durch die Proportion geschlagen vnd volfürt / Vnd doch einer solchen gestalt / damit der süssigkait vnd vollkomenheyt des gesangs nichts benomen worden ist.[45]

Ein solches Stück, das in beiden Büchern und in unterschiedlichen Schwierigkeitsgraden vorliegt, wird in der zweiten, komplexeren Bearbeitung als »Alex. agricola. Ander nacken vp dem Rhin«[46] bezeichnet. Leider handelt es sich dabei aber nicht um Agricolas bekanntes *Tandernaken* und muss von daher aus der Liste der Lautenbearbeitungen seiner Stücke gestrichen werden. Eine weitere Intavolierung, die Neusidler Alexander Agricola zugeschrieben hat, das *Ave sanctissima*,[47] lässt sich bislang auch durch keine Parallelüberlieferung bestätigen, so dass ihr vorerst das gleiche Schicksal vorbehalten bleibt.

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[43] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536a (wie Anm. 26), fol. a iii^r – bemerkenswert ist die offenbare Orientierung der Verzierungskunst an der Praxis der Organisten.

[44] Ebda.

[45] Hans Gerle, *Tabulatur auff die Laudten*, Nürnberg 1533, fol. II^v, zitiert nach: *Frühe Lautentabulaturen im Faksimile*, hrsg. von Crawford Young und Martin Kirnbauer, Winterthur 2003 (Pratica Musicale, 6), S. 249f.

[46] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536b (wie Anm. 28), fol. Q ii^v–P i^v. Neusidler bemerkt im Anschluss an den Abdruck: »Welchem der Tannernack zu schwer ist / der findet jhn in

Ein Stück jedoch, das im Druck als Bearbeitung von Jacob Obrechts »Si dedero« ausgegeben wurde, ist in Wahrheit das »Si dedero« Agricolas.[48]

Damit liegt in jeder der drei Tabulatursammlungen jeweils eine Fassung dieser Komposition vor und bestätigt die Beliebtheit dieses Stückes, das von allen Kompositionen Agricolas die häufigste Überlieferung erfahren hat.[49] Durch diese dreifache Bearbeitung bietet sich ferner die Möglichkeit eines direkten Vergleichs der Fassungen untereinander, um festzustellen, wie die Autoren dieser sehr unterschiedlichen Quellen jeder auf seine Art mit der gleichen Vorlage umgangen sind.

Es fällt zunächst auf, dass alle drei Bearbeiter ihrer Vorlage sehr eng gefolgt sind. Der synoptische Abdruck des Originals mit den drei Lautenquellen zeigt, dass sie sich bis zur Schlusskadenz taktgenau decken. Lediglich in der Version Neusidlers gibt es einen kleinen Überhang, in dem der Lautenist ›überschüssige Energie‹ in Form von Skalenläufen auf dem Schlussklang gewissermaßen ›abarbeiten‹ kann (siehe Notenbeispiel 4a).

Notenbeispiel 4a–f (auf den folgenden Seiten): A. Agricola, »Si dedero«, Synopse der Vorlage mit den Versionen von Spinacino, Capirola und Neusidler a) T. 75–Ende, b) T. 1–8, c) T. 10f., d) T. 66–70, e) T. 15, f) T. 23f., g) T. 51f.

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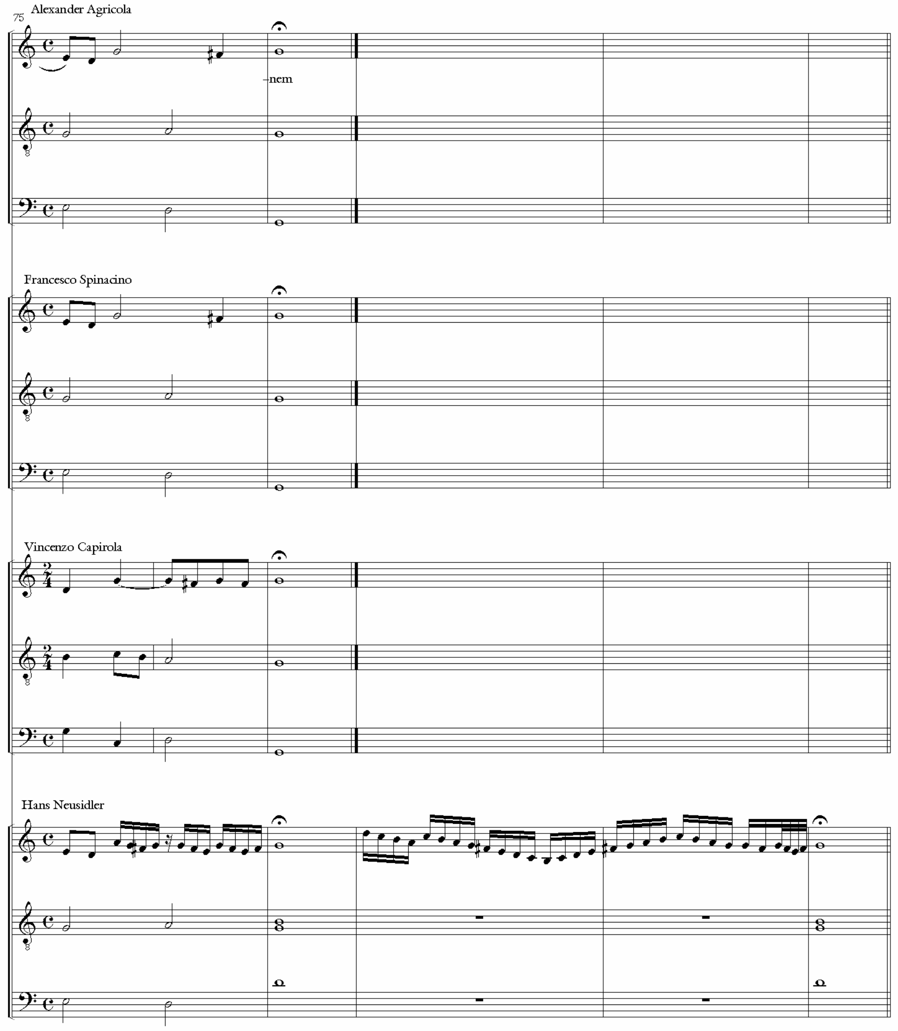
meinem getruckten schüler bůch ein wenig ringer / vnd sehr gut.« Die schlichte Bearbeitung siehe H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536a (wie Anm. 26), fol. q ii^{r}–q iiii^{r}.

[47] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536b (wie Anm. 28), fol. I ii^{v}–K iii^{r}.

[48] Vgl. *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A*, hrsg. von Helen Hewitt, Cambridge Mass. 1942 (Publications of the Mediaeval Academy of America, 42), Nr. 56, sowie O. Gombosi, Compositione, wie Anm. 32, S. LXXXV, und Howard Mayer Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600. A Bibliography*, Cambridge, Mass. (^{1}1965), ^{2}1967, S. 55.

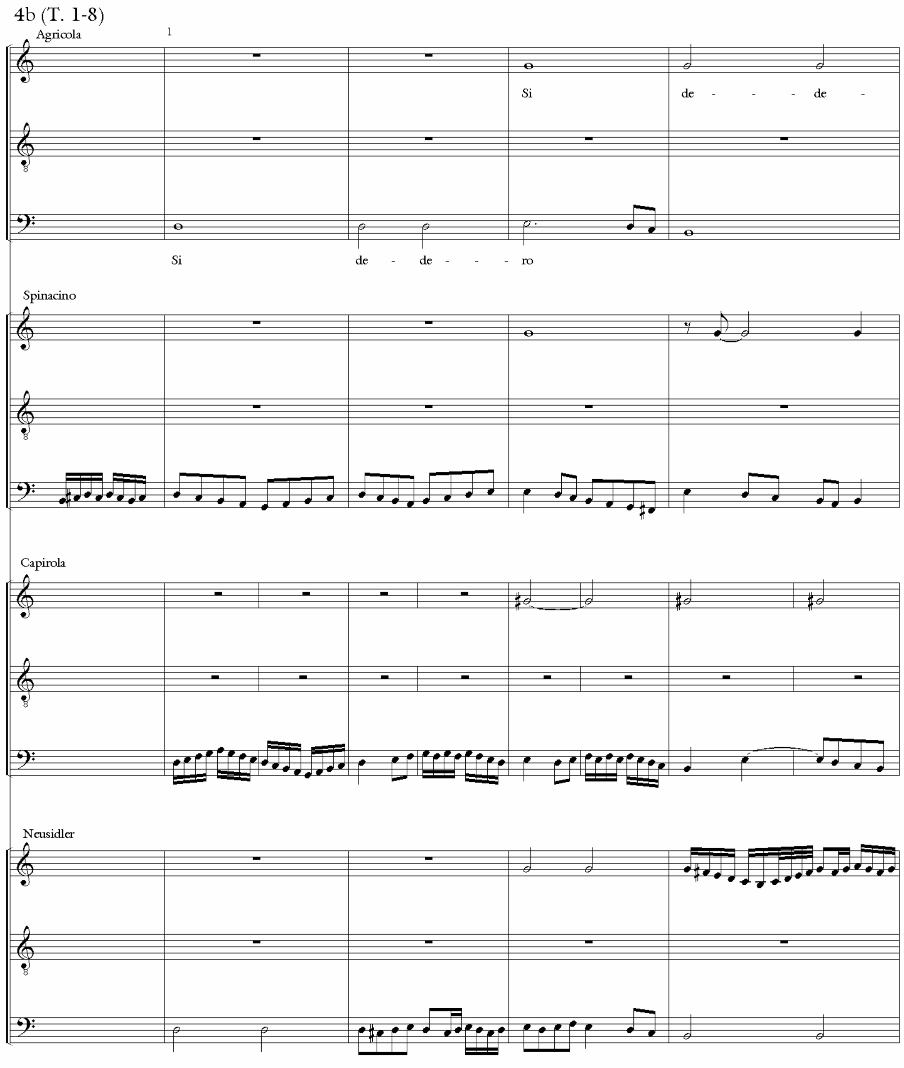
[49] Edward Lerner listet in seiner Edition 21 Überlieferungsträger – ohne Einbeziehung der Instrumentalbearbeitungen – und kommentiert: »By far Agricola’s most famous work« (wie Anm. 21, S. XVI). Eine Wertschätzung von Agricolas Komposition findet sich durch die dem Titel beigestellte Anmerkung im Index des Capirola-Tabulaturbuches: »Si dedero. Canto belisimo mai esta sona asta foza«. Die Anmerkung könnte in etwa gedeutet werden als »Si dedero: Canto bellissimo – mai questo suono ha avuto questa foggia“, übersetzt ungefähr »Si dedero: Ein sehr schönes Lied – nie hat diese Melodie eine vergleichbare Form gehabt«. (Ich danke Lorenza Donadini für diesen Erklärungsansatz.)

4a (T. 75-79)

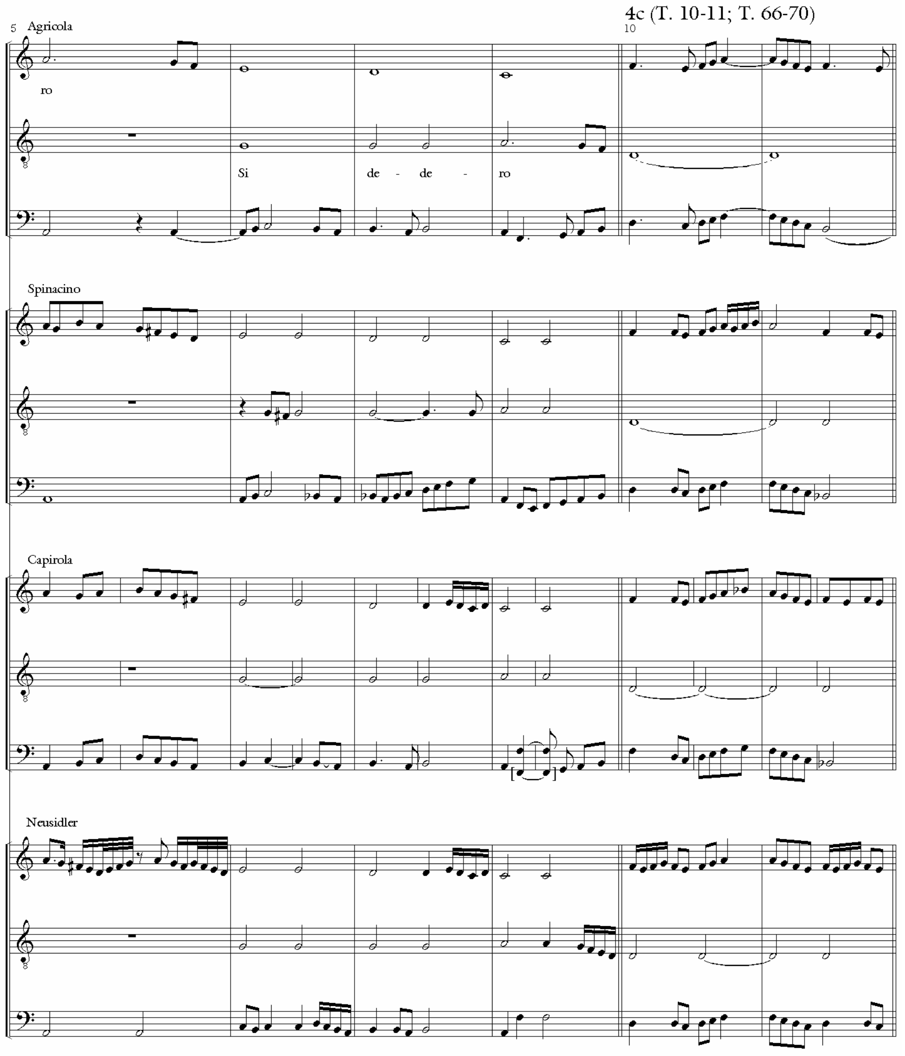

75
Alexander Agricola
-nem
Francesco Spinacino
Vincenzo Capirola
Hans Neusidler

In einigen Punkten unterscheiden sich die drei Tabulaturen schon rein äußerlich: bei Spinacino und Neusidler sind die Mensurstriche pro ganze Note (einer Brevis im Original) in der Tabulatur gesetzt, während bei Capirola eine Ebene feiner unterteilt wird – diese Tendenz zeigt sich in den Capirola-Tabulaturen generell. Die Taktnummerierung in der synoptischen Übertragung orientiert sich dabei an der gröberen Unterteilung der anderen beiden Überlieferungen. Ein weiterer Aspekt, der beim Ausprobieren auf dem

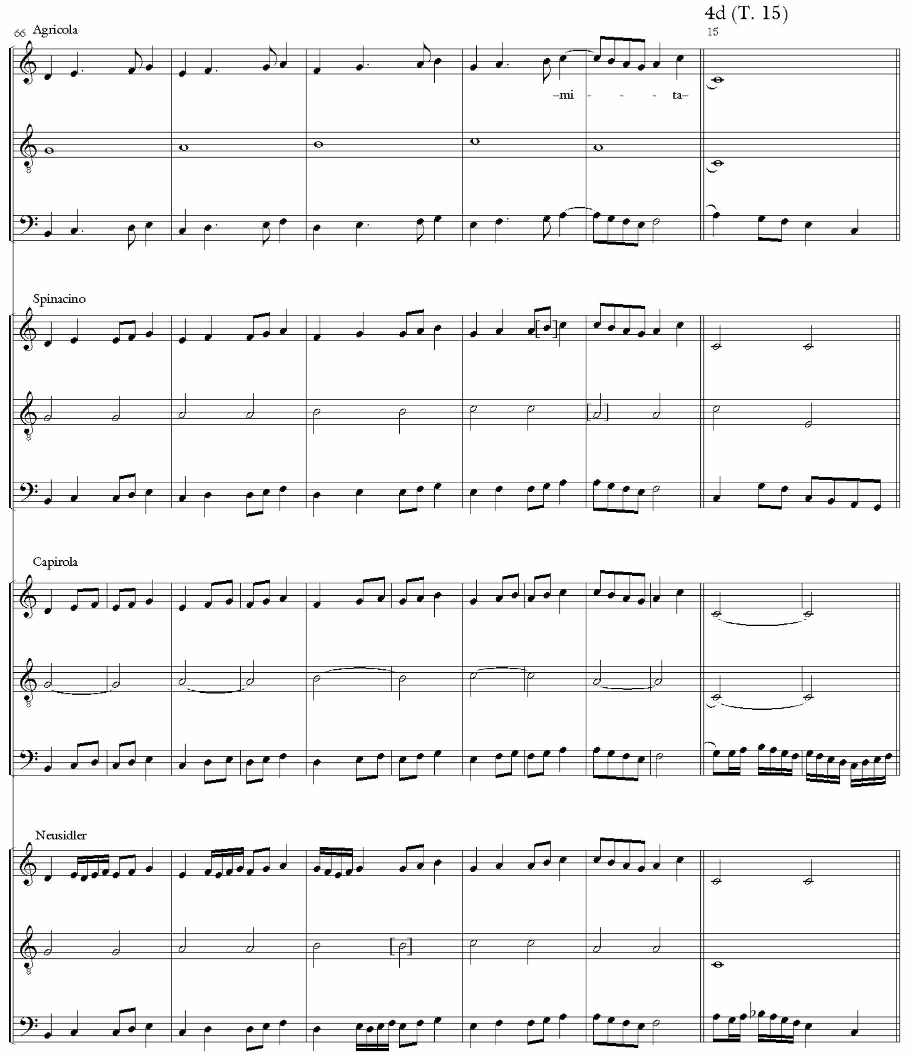
4b (T. 1-8)


Agricola
1
Si
de - - - - de -
Si
de - de - - - ro
Spinacino
Capirola
Neusidler

Instrument sofort auffällt, ist die relative Transposition der Komposition: In jeder der drei Tabulaturen wurde eine andere Lage gewählt. Spinacinos Intavolierung liegt erwartungsgemäß am höchsten und fordert den Interpreten vor allem dadurch; Capirola setzt das Stück einen Ton und Neusidler gar eine Quarte tiefer als Spinacino. Für den Abdruck hier wurden alle Übertragungen jedoch auf die Tonhöhe der Vorlage transponiert, um die Vergleichbarkeit der Versionen zu erleichtern.


4c (T. 10-11; T. 66-70)
5
Agricola
ro
Si
de - de - ro
10
Spinacino
Capirola
Neusidler

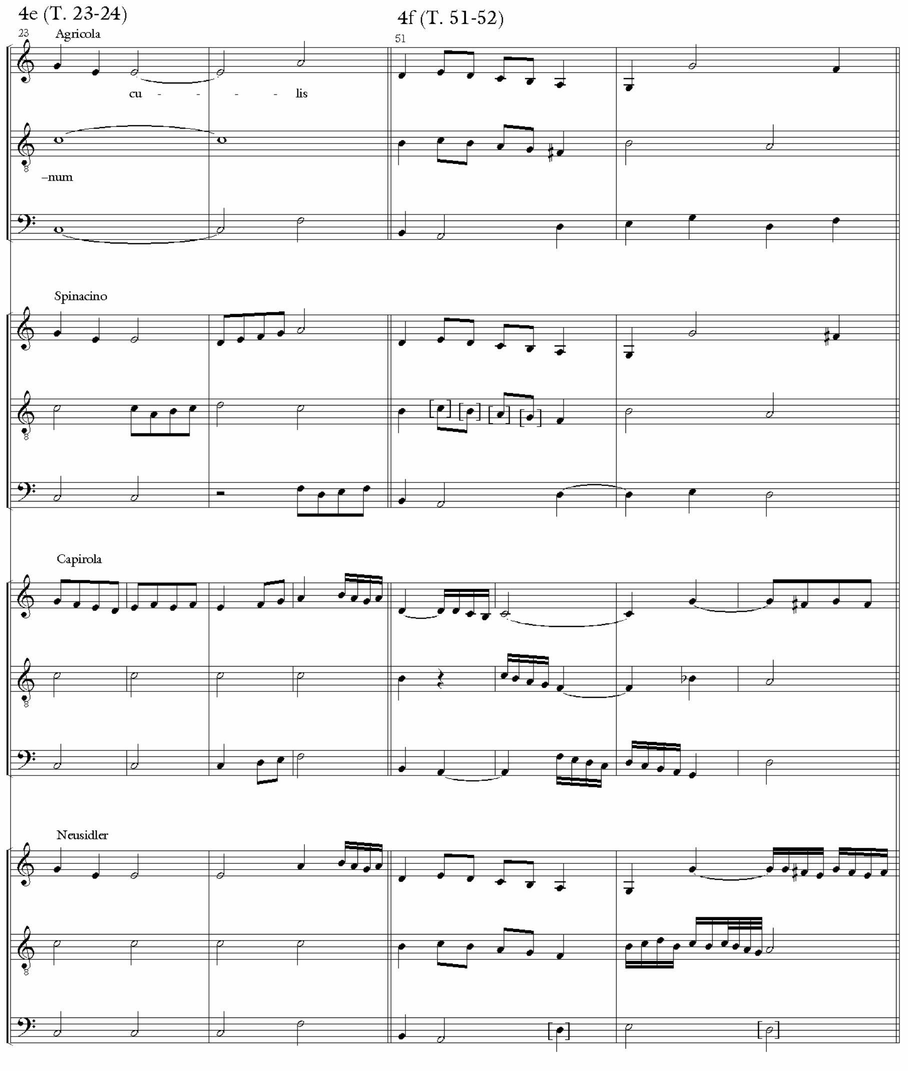
In der Wahl der Diminutionsebene wirkt die zeitliche Abfolge der Tabulaturen fast wie eine Steigerung: Spinacino diminuiert relativ gesehen am langsamsten, indem er – von seltenen Ausnahmen abgesehen – die Achtelnoten-Ebene wählt. Capirola und Neusidler diminuieren häufiger auf der Sechzehntel-Ebene und Neusidler neigt am ehesten dazu, bestimmte Floskeln noch eine Ebene tiefer bei den Zweiunddreißigsteln anzusiedeln. Diese extrem schnellen Verzierungen beschränkt er aber ganz klar auf Viertongruppen im Skalenlauf,



so dass diese Figuren sehr geregelt und idiomatisch auftreten.

Ein neuralgischer Punkt bei der Intavolierung ist die Behandlung langer Notenwerte einer gegebenen Vorlage, insbesondere wenn sie dort von struktureller Bedeutung sind, wie beispielsweise in der Imitation des langsamen Motivs, mit der das »Si dedero« eröffnet wird (siehe Notenbeispiel 4b).

Gegenüber einer vokal besetzten Fassung würden die Intavolierungen des Stückes in der Aufführungsgeschwindigkeit aufgrund der vielen Diminutionen


4e (T. 23-24)
23
Agricola
cu - - - - - lis
-num
4f (T. 51-52)
51
Spinacino
Capirola
Neusidler

sicher langsamer angelegt werden. Gerade die lang ausgehaltenen Töne, die ohnehin mit einer Laute schlecht dargestellt werden können, werden dann noch nachteiliger für das Instrument. An diesen Stellen begegnet man in allen Tabulaturen regelmäßig und wenig überraschend der oben schon erwähnten Aufspaltung in kleinere Notenwerte. Hinzu tritt die auch angewandte Möglichkeit der Umspielung und Auszierung langer Noten der Vorlage. Beide Techniken werden gerade zu Anfang der Komposition von allen drei Tabulaturen genutzt. Während die Versionen von Spinacino und Capirola sich jedoch in den ersten beiden Takten in quasi-präludierenden Läufen ergehen, beginnt Neusidlers Fassung mit einem Motiv, das in der Folge imitiert wird und damit die Struktur der Vorlage stärker widerspiegelt. Capirola hebt immerhin den zweiten Einsatz des Motivs deutlicher hervor und ermöglicht somit die Imitation zwischen Cantus und dem zuletzt einsetzenden Tenor (Takt 3–8), wobei die Wahl der Musica ficta für den Cantuseinsatz (in der Transkription ein *gis*) vor allem in Bezug auf das unmittelbar darauf mit *g* einsetzende Motiv im Tenor bemerkenswert ist.[50] In Spinacinos Fassung ist der imitierende Beginn hingegen fast völlig verschleiert – dieses formgebende Element der Vorlage scheint für seine Bearbeitung keine große Rolle gespielt zu haben. Mit dem nächsten Soggetto-Einsatz in Takt 16 verlagert sich dieser Eindruck auch auf die anderen Intavolierungen. Selbst Neusidler hebt nur noch die zweite und dritte Imitation hervor, während Capirola diese Struktur wie Spinacino gänzlich ignoriert. Anhand dieser Beobachtungen drängt sich die Vermutung auf, dass die Intavolierungen, vielleicht aufgrund einer Verlangsamung des Gesamttempos der Komposition, sich eher auf kleinere Strukturen konzentrieren und größere formale Kriterien an Bedeutung verlieren.

Dieser Eindruck bestätigt sich, wenn man den Blick auf Passagen wendet, die schon in der originalen Fassung Agricolas ›ohrenfällig‹ sind, besonders die Dezimparallelen und Sequenzen, beispielsweise in Takt 10f., 25–29, 32f., 60f. und 66–70 (siehe Notenbeispiel 4c). An solchen Stellen ähneln sich die verschiedenen Fassungen sehr stark. Auch auffällige, bewegte Motive der Vorlage finden in der Regel eine direkte Abbildung in den Lautenfassungen, zum Beispiel Takt 40–44 oder die Brücken nach Kadenzen im Bassus der Takte 15, 53f. und 64 (siehe Notenbeispiel 4d).

Eine Sensibilität für bedeutsame Punkte in der Komposition kann man am Beispiel von Takt 23f. beobachten (siehe Notenbeispiel 4e). Die Vorlage Agricolas kommt hier zur Ruhe, stagniert fast ein wenig, bevor sie sich zur groß angelegten Kadenz zum Ende des ersten Teils hin aufschwingt. Alle

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50 Gombosi kommentiert zum Einsatz von Akzidentien bei Capirola: »Capirola's transcriptions offer highly interesting cases of controversial accidentals. Even in imitations, false cross-relations are not lacking. Such things do occur in more carelessly transcribed versions, where the notes of the original are quite mechanically translated into the figures of lute tablature. Yet the cases we have mentioned above, while daringly nonconforming to theoretical standards as we understand them, are hardly the results of careless intabulation.« (O. Gombosi, Compositione, wie Anm. 32, S. XXIX).

Intavolierungen, besonders aber die Neusidlers, folgen dieser Vorgabe und gehen die Diminution in diesen Takten wesentlich reduzierter an.

In der Intavolierung Hans Neusidlers lässt sich eine Tendenz feststellen, die Vorlage polyphoner abzubilden, als in den anderen Tabulaturen. Nicht allein die oben erwähnte stärkere Betonung der imitativen Passagen der Vorlage, sondern auch der Einsatz von Verzierungen bestätigt dieses Ansatz, wie im Takt 52 zwischen Tenor und Cantus (siehe Notenbeispiel 4f).

Die Intavolierung von Capirola hingegen neigt eher zu »bastarda«-Diminutionen, die sich durch die Stimmen hinwegbewegen, anstatt jede Stimme separate Verzierungsmotive ausführen zu lassen. Sehr gut kann man diese Neigung in Takt 51 beobachten, wo Spinacino lediglich die Cantusmelodie übernimmt, Neusidler den Kontrapunkt praktisch identisch abbildet und Capirola überlappende Läufe durch alle Stimmen zieht (siehe Notenbeispiel 4f).

Der Vergleich der drei Bearbeitungen von Agricolas »Si dedero« zeigt: Was idiomatische Wendungen angeht, so ähneln sich die drei Tabulaturen in vielen Fällen – besonders bei bewegten Stellen des Originals folgen die Intavolierungen der Vorlage recht eng und verwenden typische Floskeln, um den Satz für die Laute sinnvoll abzubilden. Die Wahrnehmung von Strukturen der Vorlage und die Einschätzung ihrer Bedeutung hingegen ist von Lautenist zu Lautenist sehr unterschiedlich und tritt in den individuellen Bearbeitungen klar zu Tage. Im Grunde sind es vor allem Passagen mit lang ausgehaltenen Tönen, die von den Bearbeitern bisweilen sehr unterschiedlich in die Tabulatur übersetzt und variiert werden.

Die genannten Beobachtungen reichen aus, dass sich ein heutiger Lautenist die vorhandenen Tabulaturen für seine Zwecke einrichten oder seine eigenen Solofassungen auch von Agricola-Kompositionen schaffen kann – Fassungen, die stilgerecht sind, zugleich aber individuell auf die Fertigkeiten des Intavolierenden abgestimmt. Dabei sind der Repertoireauswahl praktisch keine Grenzen gesetzt – wie wir schon an den frühesten Intavolierungen sehen können, finden Chansons, Motetten und textlose Kompositionen, selbst Messteile gleichermaßen Eingang in die Intavolierungspraxis.

Die Laute im professionellen Lautenduo

Allein aus der Tatsache, dass weder Spinacino noch Capirola ihren Intavolierungen Komponistenzuweisungen beigeben und bei Neusidler einige Autoren den Stücken falsch zugeordnet sind, ist ersichtlich, dass Agricola im Prinzip keine gesonderte Behandlung bei der Umsetzung auf der Laute erfährt: seine Kompositionen stehen in einer Reihe mit den Werken seiner Zeitgenossen. Nur bei einem Stück scheint Neusidler eine Ausnahme zu machen. Seiner Intavolierung des *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* im zweiten Lautenbuch (für den erfahrenen Spieler) stellt er folgende Beischrift voran:

> Hie folget ein stuck / das hat zwen theil / vnd wirt von den alten singern der Alexander genant / vnd ist sehr fast kunstreich / vnd sein fast schier alle clausen der Musica darin begriffen / ist auch seer gerad vnd scharpff colorirt / mit der aller besten Organistischen coloratur oder laiflein / als einer sein leben lang der art noch nie gesehen hat / das wirt sich in dem werck erfinden.[51]

Es ist bemerkenswert, wie hoch Neusidler noch dreißig Jahre nach Agricolas Tod dessen Kompositionen einschätzt und sie seinem Publikum empfiehlt. Die besondere Wertschätzung, die dieses Stück bei Neusidler erfährt, ist erstaunlich. Es wird mit dem Namen des Komponisten selbst identifiziert, Agricola ›ist‹ sein *Cecus*. Und auch dieses Stück findet sich als zweistimmige Version und in schlichterer Fassung in Neusidlers Schülerbuch.[52] Verblüffend ist nun die Feststellung, dass Neusidler den originalen dreistimmigen Satz nicht auf einen kompositorischen Kern von Cantus und Tenor reduziert, sondern als ›Schülerfassung‹ Tenor und Contratenor zusammenzieht. Diese Vereinfachung auf einen zweistimmigen Satz bezeichnet er wiederholt selbst als »nur ein[en] ausklaubten kern«[53] und wendet sie offensichtlich aus rein didaktischen Gründen an. Zusätzlich transponiert er seine Reduktion des *Cecus* um eine Quarte nach oben. Ein Vergleich von anderen zweistimmigen Bearbeitungen für den Schüler mit ihren jeweiligen Vorlagen bestätigt die Diagnose des *Cecus*-Satzes: Neusidler reduziert für die zweistimmige Bearbeitung in jedem einzelnen Fall den Satz auf die Unterstimmen aus Tenor und Contratenor bassus – auch bei ursprünglich vierstimmigen Sätzen. Zusätzlich transponiert er den Satz jedes Mal um eine Quarte nach oben. Die Transposition wird offenbar vorgenommen, um den »ausklaubten kern« in eine angenehme Mittellage auf dem Instrument zu bringen, während für die späteren dreistimmigen Versionen der gleichen Lieder (weiter hinten im Schülerbuch und im zweiten Teil für den erfahrenen Lautenisten) mit hinzugefügtem Cantus die ursprüngliche Lage wiederhergestellt wird – zweifellos um den Cantus noch bequem unterbringen zu können.

Die Transposition und die Reduktion sind ganz klar Eingriffe, die Neusidler vornimmt, um die Sätze für den Anfänger auf der Laute so ein-fach und angenehm wie möglich zu gestalten. Warum er aber nicht Cantus und Tenor intavoliert, sondern Tenor und Contratenor bassus, ist besonders bei den Liedintavolierungen, die noch stark auf diesem Gerüst beruhen, weniger leicht nachvollziehbar. Vielleicht war die enge Lage beider Stimmen und die damit verbundene leichtere Umsetzung auf der Laute ausschlaggebend für Neusidlers Wahl. Dagegen spricht jedoch, dass sich in diesen Sätzen auch der Cantus in der Regel nicht sehr weit vom Tenor entfernt. Der Beweggrund mag von daher didaktischer Natur gewesen sein, zumal die bewusste Auswahl von sehr bekannten Liedern das Erlernen auf der Laute nach Neusidlers eigener Aussage erleichtern sollte[54] – die Wahl der intavolierten Stimmen hingegen könnte sich aus anderer Motivation heraus ergeben haben: Tradition.

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[51] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536b (wie Anm. 28), fol. P i^{v}.

[52] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536a (wie Anm. 26), fol. g iiii^{v}–h iiii^{v}.

[53] H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536a (wie Anm. 26), fol. f ii^{r}.

Wenn man das professionelle Lautenduo als eine Standardbesetzung für instrumentale Ausführung von komponierten Vorlagen auf der Laute im 15. Jahrhundert annimmt, dann könnte es sein, dass, wenn man in dieser Zeit nur einen Teil einer Komposition auf der Laute intavolieren wollte, man automatisch in die ›einfacherere‹ Rolle innerhalb dieses Duos verfiel, nämlich die des Tenorista. Auch die Transposition in eine Mittellage des Tenor-Instrumentes ergäbe dann Sinn, denn der Improvisateur für die Oberstimme spielte ja gewöhnlich auf einem kleineren Instrument, auf dem der Cantus auch in höherer Lage noch problemlos ausführbar gewesen sein dürfte.

Und tatsächlich scheint es sich bei Neusidlers Behandlung der Unterstimmen von *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* um das gleiche Prinzip zu handeln, das zuvor Spinacino schon in seinen Duetten verwandte: Tenor und Contratenor sind auf sehr ähnliche Weise eingerichtet, während die fehlende Oberstimme sich gut in Form von improvisierenden Diminutionen ergänzen lässt. Es ist klar, dass dies nicht die Absicht Neusidlers war und auch ein hinzutretender professioneller Lehrer, der diese Oberstimme für den Tenorista-Schüler hätte zur Verfügung stellen können, kann nicht angenommen werden, denn Neusidler betont in seinem Vorwort ausdrücklich, dass kein Lehrer für sein Lautenbuch benötigt würde (wobei solche ›Werbesprüche‹ auch reinem Verkaufskalkül geschuldet sein könnten). Es scheint aber so, dass in der Art der Intavolierung noch eine Praxis nachscheint, die für die Umsetzung solcher Musik auf der Laute weit verbreitet gewesen sein muss.

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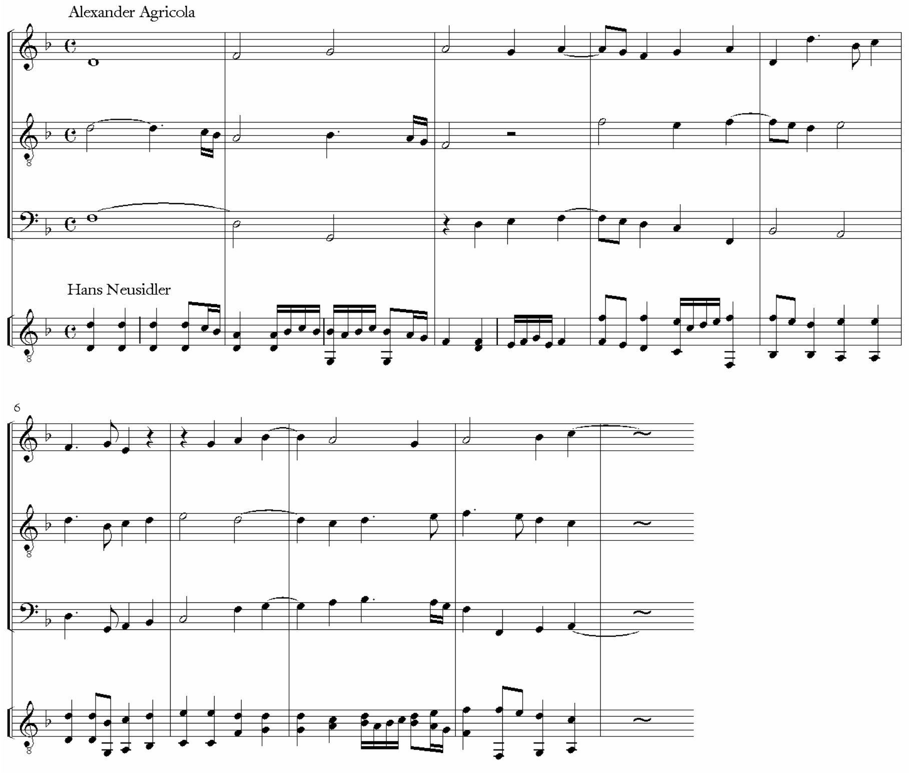
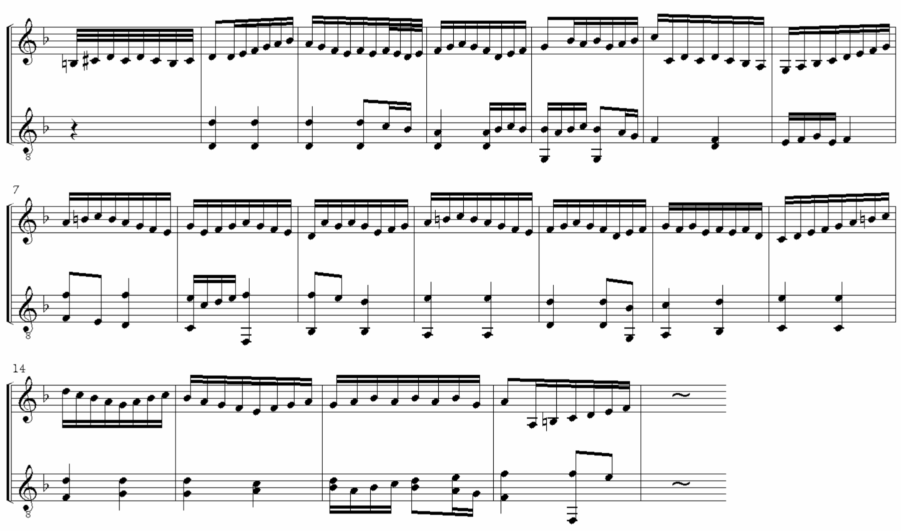
[54] Neusidler schreibt dazu: „Hie folgen noch mer ettlicher guter alter lieder ... Die hab ich darumb gesetzt / das sie vorhin in vil landen weyt vnd preit erkannt / vnd vil dester leichter zu lernen sind weder die vnerkanten“ (H. Neusidler, Lautenbuch 1536a, wie Anm. 26, fol. f i^{v}).



Notenbeispiel 5: A. Agricola, *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* (Anfang), oben: Vorlage, unten: Intavolierung von H. Neusidler, *Alexander agricola*

Und dadurch ergibt sich mit dem Duo eine weitere Möglichkeit für den Einsatz von Lauten in Kompositionen um 1500 – mit einer klaren Rollenverteilung: Der Tenorista ist zuständig für eine Einrichtung der Unterstimmen der Vorlage, während der Solist die Oberstimme in einem bestimmten Stil improvisierend diminuiert. Für einen ersten Versuch in diese Richtung bietet sich von daher Neusidlers vorbereitete Intavolierung des ›Unterbaus‹ von *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* an. Zu Neusidlers Zeit wäre hier wahrscheinlich stilistisch eine ›modernere‹ Art der Oberstimmenverzierung angewandt worden als es um 1500 noch der Fall gewesen wäre; mit den Spinacino-Diminutionen existiert aber zumindest ein überliefertes Beispiel für eine Praxis, die mit Sicherheit ins 15. Jahrhundert zurückweist. Als Abschluss des Referats beim Symposium am 28. April 2006 in der Musikhochschule Trossingen wurde nach Art von Notenbeispiel 6 eine Version des *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* mit zwei Lauten präsentiert, die diese Beobachtungen vereint. Als Modell für die Oberstimmenauszierung wurden die Duos von Spinacino verwandt, besonders das *Jay pris amours*, um eine mögliche Oberstimmenversion zu Neusidlers *Cecus*-Intavolierung der Unterstimmen zu verfassen.[55]



Notenbeispiel 6: A. Agricola, *Cecus non judicat de coloribus* (Anfang), hypothetische Fassung für Lautenduo (Begleitung: Hans Neusidler, Diminution: Marc Lewon). Im Verlauf der Fassung wird der gesamte Tonumfang der Diminutionslaute vom tiefsten bis zum höchsten möglichen Ton ausgenutzt.

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[55] An dieser Stelle möchte ich mich ganz besonders bei meinem Lehrer Crawford Young bedanken, auf dessen langjähriger Arbeit und zahlreichen Anregungen dieser Vortrag fußt und der so freundlich war, sich als Tenorista zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Kees Boeke

Agricola and the »Basevi Codex« Some Considerations About the Performance of Chansons

> Sonnez muses mélodieusement,
> Chantez de voix et jouez d'instrument,
> Par doux accord et joueuse harmonie,
> Et qu'un chacun [fait] faire étudie
> Pour réjouir tout lui entendement.[1]

There is little doubt that the secular works of Alexander Agricola[2] range from compositions for three singing voices to wholly instrumental elaborations of pre-existent song material *a 2*, *a 3* or *a 4*. It is however the repertoire that falls in between these extreme categories that represents the shady area onto which the present article will try to shed some light.

In order to distinguish between materials of a vocal, as opposed to an instrumental nature, we have to develop criteria which will enable us to fit text to musical notes. The opposite procedure of transforming vocal into instrumental music does not present any particular difficulties and seems to have been common practice since the Middle Ages.

The *Basevi Codex* is a case in point as its text treatment in the manuscript is extremely sloppy and haphazard. It thus presents difficulties in determining the exact destination of many of the compositions, although from other sources it might be clearer sometimes to which category of pieces a chanson or instrumental fantasia belongs. Generally texted in Basevi are the motet-chansons, the Latin chansons and the songs by Pierre de la Rue (10 out of 15, against Agricola 4 out of 22 or Johannes Ghiselin 4 out of 11). *Basevi* was compiled c. 1505–1508 for a Senese patron at the Brussels/Mechelen scriptorium in use by the Habsburg-Burgundian court.[3] Agricola died of the plague in 1506 in Spain and so certainly did not oversee this collection himself. Also La Rue is known to have been in Spain in this same period, but he returned to Flanders only after august 1508[4] and thus it seems unlikely that he had any influence in the copying of his chansons. However this may be, circumstantial evidence might yield an indication to which creative period in Agricola's life these chansons and instrumental pieces belong. Ottaviano Petrucci's first publication of lute intabulations and diminutions by Francesco Spinacino of 1507,[5] which contains various elaborations of famous Agricola songs, inevitably tells us that this repertoire had achieved ›top hit‹ status, as is consistently the case with any form of known diminution repertoire, be it the *Faenza Codex* of the early 15th century or the late 16th century Italian diminution schools. As a rule, the model takes twenty to thirty years to become authentic ›public domain‹. In other words, it seems likely that an important part of Agricola's secular output must have been composed roughly before the 1490s at least. Of course, the presence in the *Basevi* compilation itself points in the same direction: A precious choice of ›famous‹ compositions would form the core repertoire of a typical chansonnier, not freshly composed material that nobody knew yet.

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[1] *Basevi Codex. Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio, MS 2439*, facs. edn., introd. Honey Meconi (Peer, 1990), fols. 71^{v}–72^{r}. French modernized.

[2] *Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia*. Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 22, ed. Edward R. Lerner, vol. 5*: Cantiones, Musica Instrumentalis, Opera dubia* (American Institute of Musicology, 1970).

[3] H. Meconi, Introduction, in Basevi Codex (cf. fn. 1), p. 7.

These considerations of at least an overall timeline are especially important for repertoire where instruments are involved: Which type of instrument was available, practical and plausible at the precise moment that these chansons or instrumental pieces were written?

Howard Brown and Keith Polk in their section about instrumental music in the latest revision of the *Oxford History of Music*[6] take the period between c. 1300 and c. 1520 as an historically coherent timeframe where essentially the same type of instruments were in use and can be categorized. The ›revolution‹ of the early 16th century created a totally new concept of instrument families like the viola da gamba quartet,[7] recorder consort etc.,[8] which coincided incidentally with the ultimate shift in secular composition from three to four part writing. But this means inescapably that the ›instrumentarium‹ to be applied to Agricola's secular music, and that of his contemporaries, is essentially still of medieval origin and tradition. And of course the same applies to the entire Burgundian chanson repertoire immediately preceding, that still holds a tight grip on the composers of the next generation, who in the endless emulation, elaboration and diminution of their models show admiration, respect and a sense of tradition.

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[4] Honey Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg-Burgundian Court* (Oxford, 2003), p. 254.

[5] Francesco Spinacino, *Intabulatura de lauto. Libro primo* [*secundo*] (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1507), RISM 1507^5, Reprint, introd. François Lesure (Geneva, 1978).

[6] Howard Mayer Brown and Keith Polk, »Instrumental music, c. 1300 – c. 1520,« *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages*. The New Oxford History of Music 3.1, ed. Reinhard Strohm and Bonnie J. Blackburn (Oxford, 2001), pp. 134–5.

[7] See Dietrich Kämper, *Studien zur instrumentalen Ensemblemusik des 16. Jahrhunderts in Italien*. Analecta musicologica 10 (Köln, 1970), pp. 81–85; Italian translation by Lorenzo Bianconi as *La musica strumentale nel rinascimento. Studi sulla musica strumentale d'assieme in Italia nel XVI secolo* (Torino, 1976), pp. 95–9.

[8] Although mention of a »quatuor de flutes« is already made in the 1440s at the Burgundian court. See Jeanne Marix, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens de la Cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe le Bon (1420–1467)*. Sammlung musikwissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen 39 (Strasbourg, 1939, Reprints Geneva, 1972, and Baden-Baden, 1974), pp. 105–6.

Agricola's ›heroes‹ in this respect are typically Binchois, Johannes Ockeghem, Hayne van Gizeghem and Walter Frye, the English ›Burgundian‹. Of his roughly fifty chansons and motet-chansons a solid 47 are three part, with only one »Fortuna desperata« *a 6*, a »Je n'ay deuil« *a 4* (based on Ockeghem's chanson a 4) and the motet-chanson »Revenez vous« *a 4*. Three part writing also prevails in the secular works of an other prolific chanson composer of the previous generation, Antoine Busnoys: 46 pieces *a 3*, against 16 *a 4* of which, however, 7 are poly-textual or so-called double-chansons. This tradition goes back all the way basically without interruption via Guillaume Dufay, Binchois, and Arnold and Hugo de Lantins to the Ars subtilior composers of the *Chantilly Codex* and ultimately, Guillaume de Machaut. Historically the majority of chansons *a 3* are presented with a texted and obviously vocal cantus part, and textless tenor and contratenor parts. A smaller portion have two texted parts, the second of which is either a »biscantus« or a texted tenor or contratenor; the least frequent form is a fully texted chanson in all parts.

Agricola's compositions *a 4* in the *Basevi Codex* consist of the motet-chanson »Revenez vous regretz« / »Quis det ut veniat«, the instrumental elaboration upon Walter Frye's »Tout a par moy«, two versions of Ockeghem's »D'ung aultre amer« and one of »Comme femme« by Binchois in the same manner. Agricola does not venture into four or more part song writing like some of his illustrious colleagues; he stays firmly rooted in tradition. Of the 33 texted chansons by him that we know, 24 are still written in the *formes fixes*.[9]

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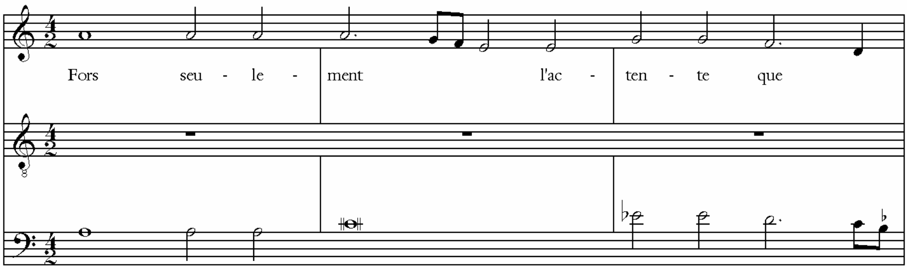
[9] For all works by Agricola see Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia, vol. 5 (cf. fn. 2).

»Fors seulement«

The *Basevi Codex* contains no less then seven elaborations on Ockeghem's famous »Fors seulement« tenor,[10] by Ghiselin (2), La Rue, Antoine Brumel, Matthaeus Pipelare, Marbriano de Orto and Jacob Obrecht, all *a 4*. Interestingly, Agricola is not represented in this company, and the only »Fors seulement« ascribed to the latter in Petrucci's *Canti C*[11] is actually most likely by Brumel (ascribed to him in the collections *Basevi*, *Pernner*[12] and *Fridolin Sicher*[13]).

Why exactly this little rondeau became such a touchstone for (instrumental?) composition is open to speculation, and the same question applies to its English counterpart, the *In Nomine*. However, there are certain aspects of its melody, and specifically the first four *tactus* of it, as stated both in the tenor and superius, that deserve special observation (Example 1).



Example 1: Johannes Ockeghem, »Fors seulement«, bb. 1–3

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[10] See Helen Hewitt, »›Fors seulement‹ and the Cantus Firmus Technique of the Fifteenth Century«, *Essays in Musicology in Honor of Dragan Plamenac to His 70th Birthday*, ed. Gustave Reese and Robert J. Snow (Pittsburgh, 1969), pp. 91–126, and Cristina Urchueguía, »Intertextualität und historisches Textverständnis in der Musik der Renaissance. ›Fors seulement‹: zwischen Werk und θεμα,« *Text und Autor*. Beihefte zu editio 15, ed. Christiane Henkes and Harald Saller with Thomas Richter (Tübingen, 2000), pp. 115–51.

[11] RISM 1504^3; *Ottaviano Petrucci. Canti C Numero Cento Cinquanta: A Facsimile of the Venice, 1503/4 Edition*. Monuments of Music and Music Literature in Facsimile 1.25 (New York, 1978), fols. 5^v–6^r.

[12] D–Rp, Cod. ms. 120, fols. 324–5.

[13] CH–SGs, 461, fol.-no. 9, pp. 16–7, facs. edn. *The Songbook of Fridolin Sicher around 1515 (Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. Sang. 461)*, introd. David Fallows (Peer, 1996).

A brevis and two semibreves on the same note, followed by a descending tetrachord consisting of a dotted semibreve, two semiminims and an arrival note. This is the archetypical configuration of the later *canzona* head-motif: The dactylic rhythm on a repeated note or most typically non-diatonic interval, followed by a consistently diatonic, or ›melodic‹ group of notes. It is at the same time the archetypical juxtaposition of separated, articulated (in instrumental terms) or syllabic (in vocal terms) material and linear, »legato« (in instrumental terms) or melismatic (in vocal terms) material in a nutshell. Of course, the *canzona*, or more complete *canzon alla francese*, was nothing but an Italian instrumental translation of the French eminently popular »*Parisian*« *chanson* of the 1520s, 1530s and 1540s. That the Italian *canzona* became an instrumental form par excellence for a century and a half or so, certainly had its origins in the widespread practice of instrumentalists playing these chansons, probably more often than not garnished with the wildest diminutions; in fact, in the 16th century this became their bread and butter. The »*Parisian*« *chanson*, in its turn, drew heavily on its forebears, not so much formally, but certainly in terms of melodic language and poetical substance. And the so popular head-motif that we generally associate with it, actually had much older origins as testified by the »Fors seulement« theme, and not only: As a matter of fact, 40 out of the 87 compositions in the *Basevi Codex* use this thematic structure as the opening motif of a piece in one or more voices. But then, even Ockeghem, when he coined his first »Fors seulement« before 1460,[14] already had some examples he could follow. In conclusion, the »Fors seulement« motif and its direct ›relatives‹ form a very substantial part of the thematic material of chansons over an extended period of time. Moreover, in its various historical guises it seems to have been closely associated with instrumental performance.

A second observation regards the equally archetypical descending tetrachord that constitutes the second half of the »Fors seulement« theme. Ockeghem employs it to give expression to a particularly dark and depressing poem, where the desolate subject unusually is the girl and not the boy. A separate study could be made of the use of this simple device in expressing sorrow throughout musical history, the most obvious, and famous, example probably being Dowland's »Flow my teares« (not to mention Anton Bruckner's third symphony).[15]

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[14] See David Fallows, »Ockeghem,« *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, second edn., ed. Ludwig Finscher, Personenteil, vol. 12 (Kassel and Stuttgart, 2004), col. 1282.

[15] See Nicole Schwindt, »Die burgundische Formel,« *›L'esprit français‹ und die Musik Europas. Entstehung, Einfluss und Grenzen einer ästhetischen Doktrin. Festschrift für Herbert Schneider.*

A third aspect to be mentioned here, to which we will come back later, regards the practice of the transposition of modes, or transposition in general. Of the 34 compositions built on Ockeghem's original (in a, a transposed Dorian itself with Phrygian flavours) nine follow his version, seven are transposed down a fifth, seven are transposed down an octave, seven an octave plus a fifth, one is a fourth down, one is a fifth up and two are an octave up. This rich spectrum follows traditions and conventions that have been described by theorists since the early Middle Ages.

Text underlay

The problem of text underlay in medieval and Renaissance music is as complex as it is essential for the correct understanding of the repertoire we are performing.

We have, in my opinion, to accept a few basic assumptions in order to make any significant progress in this thorny field. First of all we have to accept the fact that virtually no medieval or Renaissance manuscript presents us with a realistic text underlay as we would conveniently like it.

As a consequence we have to develop criteria of texting from historical material where for one reason or another, the text placing is clear and beyond doubt, as for example in music where the text setting is entirely, or almost entirely syllabic. In the specific case of Agricola we can take one of his *Lamentations* (printed by Petrucci in 1506[16]) as an interesting guide, because in fact here the correlation between text rhythm and musical rhythm leaves relatively little doubt as to which syllables belong to which musical notes (Figure 1).

The system that emerges here could be synthesized as follows:

1. Each text or verse line starts out syllabically and is followed by a melisma (if there is one) on the last two or three syllables.
2. The closing syllable of each line is never printed or written exactly under the last note of the musical phrase that goes with it, but there is no logic or system in the way this is done. A case in point are the letters »-ph« that close the word »Aleph«: it is not realistic to ›sing‹ the last three notes of this

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Studien und Materialien zur Musikwissenschaft 40, ed. Michelle Biget-Mainfroy and Rainer Schmusch (Hildesheim, 2007), pp. 149–66.

[16] *Lamentationum Jeremie prophete liber primus* [*secundus*] (Venice, Ottaviano Petrucci, 1506), RISM 1506^1, Reprint (Stuttgart, 2004); Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia (cf. fn. 2), vol. 3: *Lamentationes, Hymni, Magnificat* (1966).

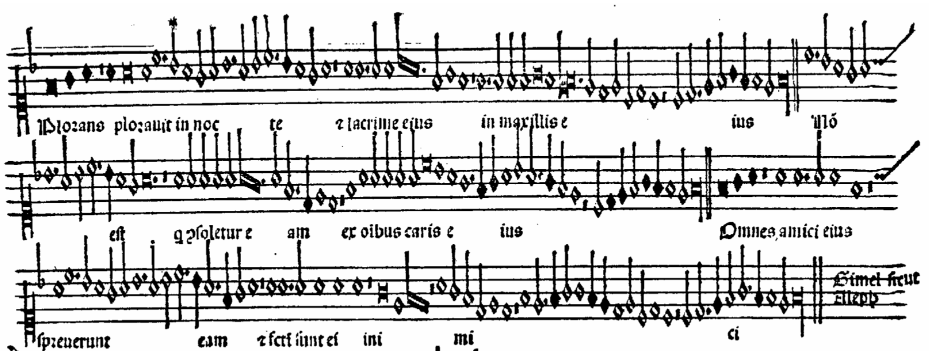
Plozans plozauit in noc
te
⁊ lacrime eius
in maxillis e
ius
Ilō
est
q cõsoletur e
am
ex oibus caris e
ius
Omnes amici eius
spreuerunt
eam
⁊ facti sunt ei
ini
mi
ci
Gimel sicut
Aleph

Figure 1: Alexander Agricola, »Plorans« , Discantus, fol. 14^v

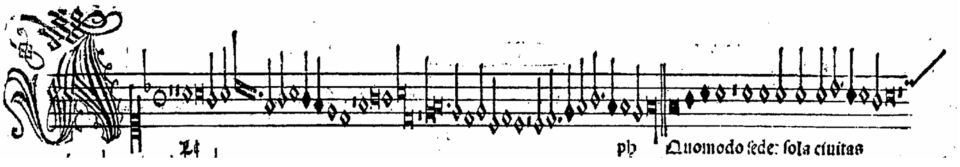
Le
ph
Quomodo sede: sola ciuitas

Figure 2: Alexander Agricola, »Aleph« (beginning), Discantus, fol. 13^v

melisma on a »ph« sound. It is safe to assume that the last note corresponds with the last syllable (Figure 2).

3. The only two repeated notes present in the musical phrase at the beginning of the »Aleph« immediately carry the two initial syllables confirming that, generally, repeated notes ask for change of syllable. Of course on typical extended melismas like on the heading letters of the Lamentations, the melisma can also include rests and repeated notes. It should also be noted that the letter »Aleph« normally splits into two syllables »A-« and »-leph«, where the original print shows a further split between »-le-« and »-ph«. This further stresses the idea of the syllable change immediately at the beginning.
4. Since most of the text is ›spoken‹ before entering into the melismatic part of it, its meaning is already clear and therefore the melisma does not interfere with the intelligibility of the text.
5. Rests (necessary, or at least convenient, for the singer to breathe) separate musical phrases, verse lines (in poetry), groups of words within a verse line, and sometimes single words.

Some further observations: The ubiquitous presence of the »Fors seulement« rhythm is solidly rooted in the construction of the French verse itself

»Fors seulement / l'attente que je meure« places the traditional caesura after the first four syllables (long-short-short-long), musically expressed either by a rest or a phrasing. It also shows that the equally ubiquitous figuration on »-ment«, is to be considered a melismatic entity, not to be broken by the introduction of a new syllable.

I will try to apply these criteria to some of Agricola's chansons, and see which conclusions can be drawn.

»Va t'en regret«

»Va t'en regret«[17] is the first of a whole section in the *Basevi Codex* of Agricola's compositions *a 3*, it has text incipits only in all voices and is notated in Agricola's habitual C2, C4, F3/F4 clef combination. The piece is a *unicum*, but fortunately his colleague Loyset Compère wrote a song on the same poem, so we do have a text. It is a good example for verifying our text underlay criteria.

Both superius and tenor consist of nine musical portions relatively regularly divided by rests. Some fragments can further be subdivided in places where we find cadences. A *rondeau cinquain* with a caesura after the fourth (or sixth) syllable would thus ideally result in ten musical fragments, which is more or less indeed the case here. Both parts, that incidentally often imitate each other, show carefully delineated melodic structures, with an average phrase length that ranges between one and three measures. The four-note head-motif of each of the five verse lines (à la »Fors seulement«) is easily recognizable at various points in the composition. None of these characteristics are present in the bassus part, which starts the piece in full swing never to stop until bar 10. Its tessitura is large, from *F–d'*, moving rapidly through the registers. It is technically possible of course to sing this part, but the texting will be entirely haphazard, and the contrast with the two eminently vocal upper parts would be striking, not to say odd or illogical.

Some remark should be made about the »c« fragments in my transcription: Fragment 2b does not leave a shade of doubt about its text underlay and where it ends, with a full cadence and a *pausa generalis* in all three voices. Neither is it problematic to identify fragment 3a as the beginning of the third verse line. The option of an instrumental interlude seems almost to force itself upon us.

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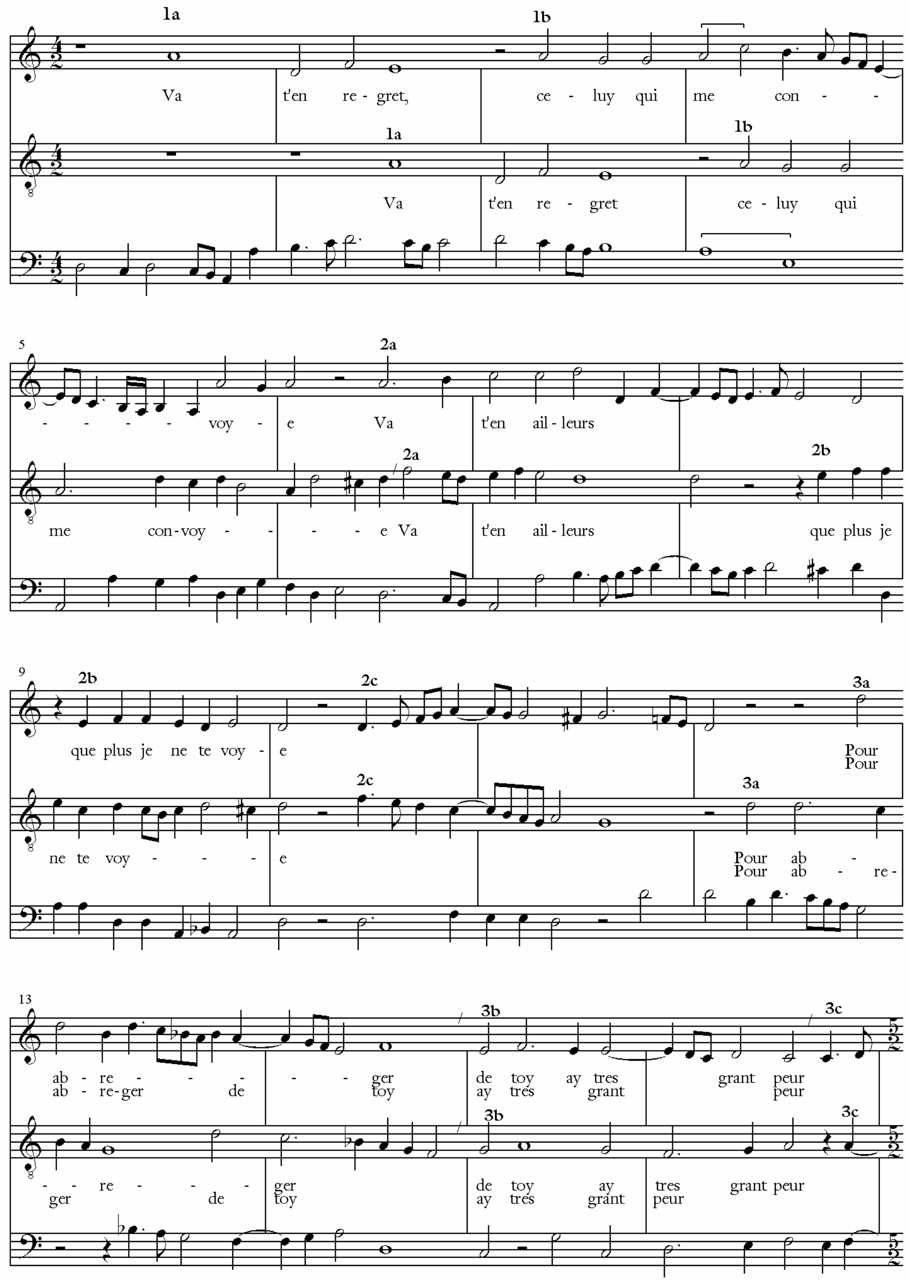
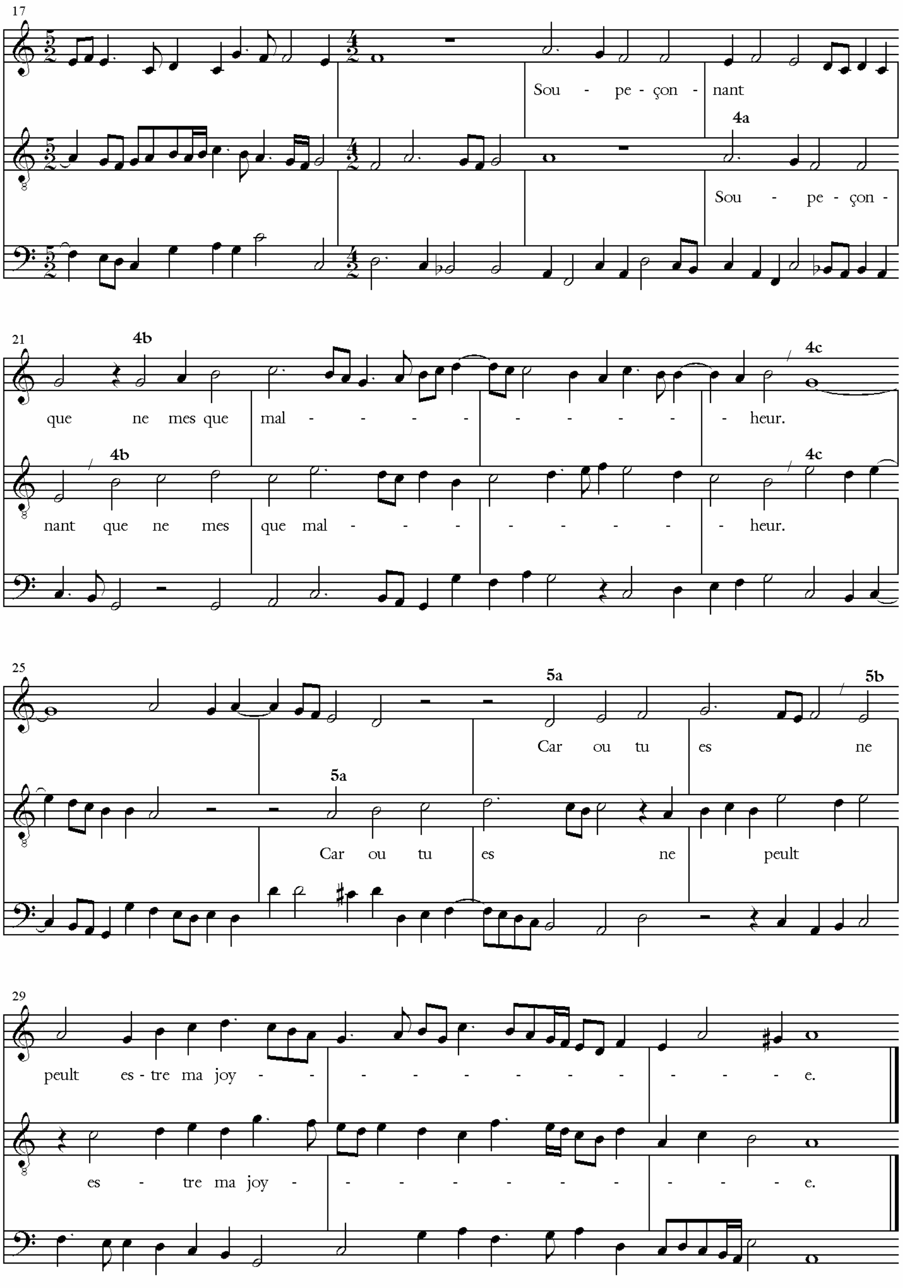
[17] Basevi Codex (cf. fn. 1), fols. 58^v–59^r: »Vaten Regret«. See Example 2.


1a
Va t'en re - gret,
1b
ce - luy qui
me con - - - - - - - voy - e
2a
Va t'en ail - leurs
2b
que plus je ne te voy - e
2c
3a
Pour
Pour
ab - re - - - - - - ger
ab - re-ger de toy
3b
de toy ay tres
ay tres grant
3c
grant peur
peur
me con-voy - - - - - e Va
t'en ail - leurs
que plus je
ne te voy - - - e
Pour ab - -
Pour ab - re -
- - re - - - ger
ger de toy
de toy ay
ay tres grant
tres grant peur
peur
5
9
13

Example 2: Anonymous, »Va t'en regret«


17
Sou - pe - çon - nant
4a
Sou - pe - çon -
21
4b
que ne mes que mal - - - - - - - - - - - heur.
4c
4b
nant que ne mes que mal - - - - - - - - - - heur.
4c
25
5a
Car ou tu es ne
5b
5a
Car ou tu es ne peult
29
peult es - tre ma joy - - - - - - - - - - - - - - e.
es - tre ma joy - - - - - - - - - - - - e.

Example 2 (continued)

I have proposed two different underlays for line 3, which both, however, find their natural conclusion on the third minim of bar 16: a similar florid extension follows as in bars 10 and 11. Finally, the fourth verse seems to have a sufficiently expressive melisma on the word »malheur« (equalled by the one on »joye« at the end of the piece) as it cadences in measure 24; prolonging it beyond this point seems to me musically useless and vocally unnatural.

If we hypothesize that the bass part of »Va t'en regret« is not a vocal line, we have to assume that it was meant to be played on an instrument. But which instrument? This is a crucial question that has to be addressed.

The option of transposition

It seems that the instruments in use in the 1480s were not substantially different from those played a century or a century and a half earlier. For the chanson repertoire we are of course primarily looking for the so-called »bas« instruments like lutes, harps, fiddles, gitterns, organetti, psalteries, flutes etc.[18] The size of these instruments, as we can deduce from the vast available iconography, does not permit any of them, to say it prudently, to play real bass notes or a real bass line with a tessitura that goes down to *G*, *F* or even *E* flat. But most of Agricola's chansons (like »Va t'en regret«), or many by composers of the previous generations are written in clef systems that suggest these low ranges in modern transcription. A second peculiarity concerns the cantus. We have many records and descriptions, especially from the 14th century, of performance of song by young girls with angelical, clear voices, from which we can deduct that lightness (*leggiadria*) and clarity were obviously an aesthetic ideal, which may well have persisted into the chanson repertoire of the next century.[19]

Again, this does not agree with most of the material in the chansonniers, that has its superius notated in mezzo soprano clef and range. It has been hesitatingly suggested that sometimes transposition might be an option in the performance of ›early‹ music without however addressing the problem in its entirety with all the incongruities depicted above.

In her study *The Affinities and Medieval Transposition*, Dolores Pesce[20] presents an impressive overview of all reference made to the concept of the modes transposed to their kin pitch positions at the fifth above, the fifth below (or fourth above) and the octave, the so-called affinities. The list of theorists that she cites includes most of the major and minor music scholars between Hucbald and Guido of Arezzo and Heinrich Glareanus. A few excerpts may suffice here to illustrate the issue:

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[18] See Brown and Polk, Instrumental music (cf. fn. 6).

[19] See *Der Squarcialupi-Codex Pal. 87 der Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana zu Florenz*, ed. Johannes Wolf (Lippstadt, 1955, Reprint Cologne, 1985), Einleitung.

[20] Dolores Pesce, *The Affinities and Medieval Transposition* (Bloomington, 1987).

> Jacques de Liège, *Speculum musicae* (around 1330): »First, I say that affinity can be threefold: perfect, more perfect, and most perfect. That is called perfect which exists through the diatesseron ... A more perfect affinity is that which exists through the diapente ... That affinity is called most perfect which exists through the octave«.[21]
>
> The *Berkeley Manuscript* (US–BEm, Ms. 744), finished in Paris 1375, contains the first set of treatises that specifically deal with the concept of affinity in polyphonic music: it gives a list of possible (appropriate) finals for each of the modes. *D–g–a–c'–d* for mode I/II, *e–a–b* natural–*e'* for mode III/IV, *f–b* flat for mode V/VI and *g–c–c'* for mode VII/VIII. [22]
>
> Nicolaus Wollick, *Opus aureum musicae* (Cologne, 1509): »But transformation of this sort was invented only on account of irregular solmization of songs which arose perhaps at finals through coniunctae or fictae, likewise because of conflicting parts of counterpoint to be placed on the hand (which pleases me more). A tenor, therefore, that sets up the bass under itself is raised higher«.[23]

Pesce explains: »In this reference to transformation he gives two reasons for the transposition of a melody a fourth higher. The first involves the avoidance of altered tones, while the second, to which he explicitly gives preference, states that the tenor should be moved to a higher position so that the contrapuntal bass will not interfere with it«.[24]

> Martin Agricola, *Rudimenta Musices* (Wittenberg 1539): »There is transposition here, however, i. e. the shifting of some song from its proper seat to a foreign one, which is given consideration rarely in plainsong (where the harmonies of individual modes are sung most properly in their own particular places), but in figured music, in which melodies frequently are raised and lowered from their own seats out of necessity to the fourth, fifth and octave, it is given special consideration.« [25]

The concept served two immediate purposes: notational, to copy a song with the least number of accidentals, and practical, to move to a convenient tessitura in performance. William Mahrt summarizes as follows: » ... while the pitches of the gamut are clearly defined in relation to each other, they do not imply absolute pitch. Performers thus always need to keep in mind that all medieval notation is potentially ›transposable‹ from the point of view of modern absolute pitch.«[26]

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[21] Ibid., p. 60.
[22] Ibid., p. 88.
[23] Ibid., p. 111.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p. 122.

A third aspect, which regards for example the original position of »Fors seulement« (in *a*, as I mentioned before, a transposed Dorian with Phrygian flavours) is pointed out by Mahrt: »While these alternative finals (sometimes called cofinals, affinities, transpositions) were viewed as more similar to their comparable regular finals than different, there were some important differences as well, especially for the final on *a*. The possibility of both *b molle* and *b quadratum* immediately above *a* makes for an ambiguity close to the final; such ambiguities can be merely passing or can contribute to a change of mode, from protus (Dorian) on *a* to deuterus (Phrygian) on *a*.«[27]

From a performance practical point of view we have to exclude the untransposed rendering of instrumental tenor parts anywhere below *c* (an octave below central *c'* in *a* = 440 Hz). There is good reason to believe that the, of course not standardized, pitch in Agricola's time and, in my opinion, an extended period before that, was tendentially considerably higher than 440 Hz, at least in Italy. The organ in S. Petronio in Bologna (built in 1470–1475 by Lorenzo di Giacomo da Prato) was originally at a pitch of *a'* = 520 Hz (until 1530), the instrument in Siena (in S. Maria della Scala, built by Giovanni di Antonio Piffero in 1516–1518) is still at its original pitch of *a'* = 517 Hz.[28]

It is, however, ultimately the circumstantial evidence of the repertoire itself and the physical properties of the instruments and the voice ranges themselves that inform us about the real pitch position of each chanson, be it by Machaut or Agricola.

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[26] William P. Mahrt, »Gamut, Solmization & Modes,« *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, ed. Ross W. Duffin (Bloomington, 2000), p. 482.

[27] Ibid., p. 486.

[28] Private communication by Liuwe Tamminga, Bologna.

Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl

Das Alte und das Neue
Agricolas »Fortuna desperata« im Interpretationsvergleich

Als der Musiker Ulrich Brätel 1534 den Auftrag bekommt, für den wieder eingesetzten Herzog Ulrich von Württemberg ein Repertoire für dessen Hofkapelle zu sammeln, sucht er nicht nur nach Neuem. Er besinnt sich auch des ›Guten Alten‹ und der damals schon ›Alten Großen Meister‹, wie er uns in dem von ihm vertonten Text wissen lässt:[1]

> So ich betracht und acht der Alten G'sang,
> mit Dank will ich ihr' Kunst hoch preisen:
> Denn Ockeghem – fürnem – ist sehr kunstreich,
> dergleichen thut Larue beweisen.
> Sein' scharfen Sinn, Josquin acht ich subtil,
> und will des Fincken Kunst auch rühmen,
> [ge]braucht seltzam art, verkärth, auf frembd manier
> wie schier thut Alexander führen.

Der »alte Gsang«, der hier geschätzt und geachtet wird, war damals schon rund fünfzig Jahre alt. Fünfhundert Jahre später befinden wir es in deutschen Landen erneut wert, uns mit dieser hoch gepriesenen »Kunst« eingehend zu beschäftigen. Von den fünf genannten Komponisten – Johannes Ockeghem, Pierre de La Rue, Josquin Desprez, Heinrich Finck und Alexander Agricola – interessiert uns insbesondere der Letztgenannte, seine »seltsame Art, das Verkehrte und die fremde Manier« in seiner Musik.

1. Theorie: Zum Verhältnis des Vokalen zum Instrumentalen um 1500

Das Aufkommen von Neuem ist immer mit Turbulenzen verbunden. Selten löst das Neue das Alte kurzerhand ab, in den meisten Fällen laufen beide

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[1] Das Lied ist überliefert in einem Druck von 1536 (*Fünf vnd sechzig teütscher Lieder/ vormals im̄ truck nie vß gangen*, Straßburg: Schöffer & Apiarius; RISM [1536]^8, Nr. 63) und in einer Neuausgabe greifbar: *65 Deutsche Lieder für vier- bis fünfstimmigen gemischten Chor a cappella nach dem Liederbuch von Peter Schöffer und Mathias Apiarius (Biener) (Straßburg spätestens 1536). Erste Partiturausgabe*, hrsg. von Hans Joachim Moser, Wiesbaden 1967, S. 207–211. Die sprachlich leicht modernisierte Textversion stammt von mir, der Originaltext kann bei Moser nachgelesen werden.

Erscheinungen eine Zeitlang parallel nebeneinander her und beeinflussen sich gegenseitig. Dabei ist es in der Regel so, dass das Neue zunächst das Alte imitiert und möglichst auf dem bereits erreichten hohen Niveau anschließt und fortsetzt. Erst nach einer Weile gewinnt das Neue eigenständigen Charakter und wirkt nun umgekehrt auf das Alte zurück, das dadurch wiederum neue Impulse gewinnt.

Was ich hier über ›das Alte‹ und ›das Neue‹ gesagt habe, kann auf viele unterschiedliche Phänomene des kulturellen Wandels angewendet werden: etwa auf die Rolle von Gedächtnis und Schrift in der musikalischen Überlieferung, auf die Produktion von Musikhandschriften und den frühen Notendruck, aber auch auf den Instrumentenbau, wenn durch technische Neuerungen neue Instrumente aufkommen. In unserem Fall ist das Alte – grob gesprochen – die »a cappella«-Vokalmusik, das Neue die eigenständige Instrumentalmusik. Differenzierter betrachtet hat es natürlich immer schon Instrumentalmusik neben dem Vokalen gegeben. Allerdings war der Stellenwert dieser beiden Musizierweisen sehr unterschiedlich, und so geht es im Folgenden genauer gesagt um das Hervortreten von instrumentaler Musik gegenüber der bislang in der Kunstmusik so dominierenden Vokalmusik am Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts.

In diesem Zeitraum gibt es in den überlieferten Dokumenten erstmals deutliche Hinweise dafür, dass das Musizieren mit Instrumenten eine gehobene Öffentlichkeit gefunden hat. Vorworte in gedruckten Sammlungen sprechen von variablen Besetzungsmöglichkeiten, die Benutzer solcher Sammlungen notieren gelegentlich die bevorzugte instrumentale Besetzung in den einzelnen Stimmbüchern, und von einigen wenigen Quellen wissen wir, dass sie schon im Hinblick auf ein bestimmtes Instrumentalensemble zusammengestellt wurden. Tabulaturschriften werden als Lern- und Spielhilfe entwickelt und lassen durch diese spezielle Aufzeichnungsweise erstmals eine eindeutige Trennung von vokaler und instrumentaler Musik zu. Dazu kommen zahlreiche Abbildungen aus der Zeit, die uns dieses Nebeneinander von Sängern, Lautenisten, Bläsern, Streichern, Harfenisten und Clavieristen anschaulich vor Augen führen. Schließlich haben sich auch vereinzelt Besetzungslisten von Hofkapellen erhalten, aus denen deutlich wird, dass Instrumentalisten sowohl solistisch als auch im Ensemble eine immer größere Rolle beigemessen wurde.

Mit dieser kurzen Rundumschau habe ich die soziale Situation in der Welt der Musik um die Jahrhundertwende angesprochen. Das ist aber nur eine Seite der Medaille. Die andere Seite ist die Frage, inwieweit die zeitgenössischen Komponisten auf diese Veränderungen musikalisch reagiert haben. Soziale Umbrüche durch den Notendruck, die neuen musikalischen Möglichkeiten, die die Instrumente boten und nun auch in den Denkhorizont der Schöpfer der artifiziellen Musik traten, haben die traditionellen Grenzen erweitert und nicht nur speziell für Instrumente gedachte Werke ans Licht gebracht. Sie haben auch umgekehrt auf die Vokalmusik zurückgewirkt und einen neuen »instrumentalen« Stil aufkommen lassen, der uns dazu verleitet, sie als Ganzes in den Bereich der Instrumentalkompositionen zu verweisen. Eine solche Annahme liegt besonders nahe, wenn die Worte in der überlieferten Quelle fehlen, denn – was sollte man da singen? Diese Diskussion ist in unserem Fach schon des Langen und des Breiten geführt worden und soll hier nicht wieder aufgegriffen werden. Ein grundlegendes Missverständnis dabei ist meiner Ansicht nach die zwanghafte Dichotomie zwischen Vokal- und Instrumentalmusik, die wir aus den nachfolgenden Jahrhunderten ›geerbt‹ haben. Meine These ist, dass es zu dieser Zeit ein interessantes Nebeneinander gibt, oder besser gesagt: ein Miteinander von beiden Musizierformen, die wir gar nicht dezidiert unterscheiden müssen. Und dieses ›Miteinander‹ hat auch in der Kompositionstechnik seine Spuren hinterlassen.

Alexander Agricolas Werk ist dafür geradezu ein Paradebeispiel. Früher als andere Musiker seiner Generation nimmt er auf diese Entwicklung in seinen Kompositionen deutlichen Bezug. Seine Stücke wirken für uns »instrumental«, was so viel heißt wie: für das Singen nicht wirklich geeignet. Warum? Weil viele kleine Notenwerte die schlichte Linie verunklaren, rhythmische Finessen die Sänger fordern und die melodischen Linien nicht zielgerichtet, sondern ›atemlos‹ oder in langen Tonleitertiraden gestaltet sind. Dazu kommen große Intervallsprünge, ausnotierte Verzierungen und oftmals ein fehlender Text.

Gerade weil bei Agricola dieses instrumentale Komponieren so früh einsetzt – im Wesentlichen ist sein Schaffen noch vor der Jahrhundertwende entstanden –, und gerade weil dieses so stark ausgeprägt ist, scheint es bei ihm besonders interessant zu sein, Interpretationen in verschiedenen Besetzungen – rein vokal, gemischt vokal und instrumental, sowie rein instrumental – vergleichend zu hören. Ziel meines Beitrags ist es, die breiten und variablen klanglichen Erscheinungsformen einer Komposition von Agricola als Realität wahrzunehmen. Denn diese sind nicht zufällig oder aus Mangel an geeigneten Musikern entstanden, sondern wurden vom Komponisten mit einkalkuliert und waren somit bereits Teil des Konzepts.

2. Praxis: Agricola und »Fortuna desperata«

»Fortuna desperata« war ein überaus beliebtes italienisches Lied, das ein dreiviertel Jahrhundert lang immer wieder neu in Musik gesetzt wurde.

Ausgehend von seinem Entstehungsort Florenz gelangte es früh in die musikalischen Zentren Neapel und Ferrara. Neben seiner Realisation als drei- bis fünfstimmiges weltliches Lied wanderte es sozusagen auch durch die Gattungen, indem es mehrmals als Grundlage von Messensätzen diente und für Tasteninstrumente bearbeitet wurde. Die ›Urgestalt‹ – gemeint ist die früheste erhaltene mehrstimmige Vertonung – ist eine dreistimmige simple italienische Canzona in mehreren Strophen, von einem unbestimmten Komponisten. Lange war Antoine Busnoys als Autor im Verdacht, in jüngerer Zeit hat man mehrere Gegenargumente für eine Zuschreibung an ihn gefunden und lässt die Autorschaft lieber offen.[2]

Honey Meconi, die sich intensiv mit der Bearbeitung von beliebten Liedmelodien im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert beschäftigt hat, kann in einer von ihr herausgegebenen Notenedition 36 Liedvertonungen von »Fortuna desperata« präsentieren, die die verschiedensten Kompositionstechniken verwenden.[3] Agricolas Beitrag dazu gehört zu den »si placet«-Kompositionen, wobei die künstlerische Leistung darin besteht, dem dreistimmigen ›Ursatz‹ weitere Stimmen hinzuzufügen. Von den insgesamt fünf Nummern dieser Gruppe ergänzen vier anonym gebliebene Komponisten eine einzelne Stimme, indem sie zwischen Superius und Tenor einen Altus einschieben. Agricola hingegen erweitert den Stimmensatz gleich auf das Doppelte, fügt also zum bestehenden dreistimmigen Satz nicht weniger als drei weitere Stimmen hinzu: einen Contra-Altus zwischen Superius und Tenor, sowie einen Vagans und einen Bassus, im Ambitus beide unterhalb der ursprünglichen Bassstimme (nun »Baricanor« genannt) gelegen.

Die Funktion dieser ›Ergänzungsstimmen‹ lässt sich schon aus den ersten Takten ersehen (siehe Notenbeispiel 1). Der Contra-Altus ist typische Füllstimme, der klanglich zwischen Superius und Tenor vermittelt und Kadenzpassagen durch rhythmisch differenzierte Figuren überbrückt. Die beiden Unterstimmen haben zum einen eine erweiterte Bassfunktion, indem sie die Oktave unterhalb der ursprünglichen Bassus-Stimme aufbauen. Zum anderen sind sie auch freie Stimmen und nützen diese Funktion durch verspielte, oft verzahnte Einwürfe in kleinen, rhythmisch bewegten ›instrumentalen‹

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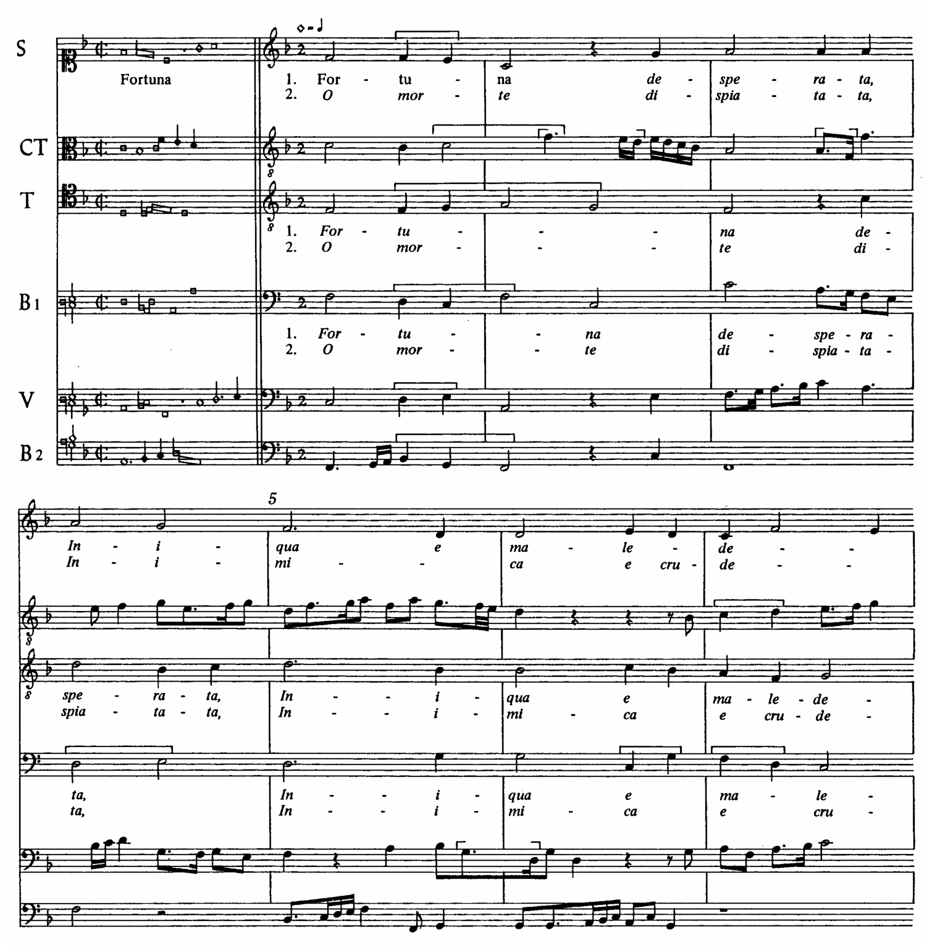
[2] Martin Picker, »Henricus Isaac and *Fortuna desperata*«, in: *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, hrsg. von Paula Higgins, Oxford 1999, S. 431–445; Joshua Rifkin, »Busnoys and Italy: The Evidence of Two Songs«, in: ebda., S. 505–571.

[3] *Fortuna desperata. Thirty-Six Settings of an Italian Song*, hrsg. von Honey Meconi, Madison 2001 (Recent Researches in the Music of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance, 37).


S
CT
T
B1
V
B2
Fortuna
5
1. For - tu - na de - spe - ra - ta,
2. O mor - te di - spia - ta - ta,
In - i - qua e ma - le - de - -
In - i - mi - - ca e cru - de - -
1. For - tu - - - na de -
2. O mor - - - te di -
spe - ra - ta, In - - - i - qua e ma - le - de -
spia - ta - ta, In - - - i - mi - ca e cru - de -
1. For - tu - - na de - spe - ra -
2. O mor - - te di - spia - ta -
ta, In - - - i - qua e ma - le -
ta, In - - - i - mi - ca e cru -

Notenbeispiel 1: Alexander Agricola, »Fortuna desperata«, Beginn[4]

Notengruppen. Der Ambitus der neuen Stimmen ist nicht außergewöhnlich groß. Bewegen sich die Stimmen des Kernsatzes (Superius, Tenor und Bassus 1) innerhalb einer None, so greifen die hinzugefügten Stimmen nur eine

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[4] Aus: *Alexandri Agricola Opera omnia*, hrsg. von Edward R. Lerner, Bd. 5: *Cantiones, Musica Instrumentalis, Opera dubia*, American Institute of Musicology 1970 (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 22.5), Nr. 47, S. 68. Die untextierten Stimmen sind die »si placet«-Stimmen.

Terz weiter aus, bleiben also im Rahmen einer Undezim (Oktave plus Quarte). Der Klangraum, der ursprünglich von *c* bis *d"* reichte, spannt sich durch die Erweiterung auf *F* bis *d"*, bereichert also vor allem in der Tiefe und ist insgesamt dichter.

Erhalten hat sich diese in der Anlage ungewöhnliche sechsstimmige Komposition in einer einzigen Quelle, dem so genannten *Augsburger Liederbuch*, einem »Gsangbuch in 4 voces« (so am Außendeckel notiert) aus dem frühen 16. Jahrhundert.[5] Vermutlich steht diese Handschrift in engem Bezug zur Hofkapelle Kaiser Maximilians sowie den Kaiser-Städten Innsbruck und Augsburg, angelegt zur Sicherung des Bestandes.[6] Die Nähe zu Ulrich Brätel ist augenfällig: Er stammt sehr wahrscheinlich aus Augsburg, hat in Wien studiert und stand in Kontakt mit dem Humanistenkreis um Joachim Vadian.[7]

Ein Blick in die chorbuchartige Aufzeichnung der Stimmen (siehe Abbildung 1 auf den folgenden Seiten) hebt die Unterscheidung von Alt und Neu deutlich hervor: Links wurden die ursprünglichen Stimmen notiert, in der rechten Hälfte die neu dazu komponierten. Text gibt es hier keinen, die Textmarke »Fortuna« (links, unterhalb des ersten Systems) bzw. »Fortuna desperata« (rechts, etwa in der Mitte der Seite) dient der Identifizierung des Satzes und mag bei den Benützern der Handschrift die dazugehörigen Worte innerlich abgerufen haben.

Der Text selbst geht zurück auf eine Sammlung von italienischsprachigen Gedichten aus den 1470er-Jahren, die aus Florenz stammt und in der Wahl der Muttersprache der traditionellen Dichtersprache Latein bewusst eine Ab sage erteilt. In den drei Strophen wird von dem ›verzweifelten Glück‹ (»fortuna desperata«) – also dem Unglück ohne Hoffnung – gesprochen, das durch den Tod der Auserwählten ausgelöst wurde (Beginn der zweiten Strophe: »O morte«) und in einer einzigen Wehklage seinen Ausdruck findet.[8]

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[5] *Das Augsburger Liederbuch. Faksimile-Ausgabe ... nach dem Exemplar Sign. CIM 43 (2° Cod. 142a) der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg*, Stuttgart 1997 (Faksimile-Edition Augsburg, 3); Neuausgabe von Luise Jonas, *Das Augsburger Liederbuch. Die Musikhandschrift 2° Codex 142a der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg. Edition und Kommentar*, 2 Bde., München 1983 (Berliner musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten, 21), Bd. 2, Nr. 51, S. 127–131.

[6] Rainer Birkendorf, *Der Codex Pernner. Quellenkundliche Studien zu einer Musikhandschrift des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts (Regensburg, Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek, Sammlung Proske, Ms. C 120)*, 3 Bde., Augsburg 1994 (Collectanea Musicologica, 6), Bd. 1, S. 97–99.

[7] Martin Bente (Hans Albrecht), Art. »Brätel«, in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2. Aufl., hrsg. von Ludwig Finscher, Personenteil, Bd. 3, Kassel und Stuttgart 2000, Sp. 760–764.

Fortuna desperata,	Verzweifeltes Schicksal,
Iniqua e maledecta,	widerwärtig und verflucht,
Che de tal dona electa	das den guten Namen
La fama hai denigrata.	einer hervorragenden Frau verdunkelt hat.
O morte dispietata,	O erbarmungsloser Tod,
Inimice e crudele,	feindlich und grausam,
Che d'alto più che stelle	der du sie, die höher als die Sterne stand,
L'hai cusi abassata.	so erniedrigt hast.
Meschino et despietata	Einsam und verzweifelt
Ben piangere posso may;	kann ich nicht anders als weinen,
Et desiro finire	und ich sehne mich nach dem Ende
li mei guay.	meines Kummers.[9]

Gehen wir nochmals zurück handschriftlichen Quelle (siehe Abbildung) und richten wir das Augenmerk auf typische Charakteristika der Stimmführung, die man gemeinhin dem ›Instrumentalen‹ zuweist. Dazu gehören in erster Linie kleinrhythmische Passagen mit einer Folge von Notenwerten wie Minimae und Semiminimae (inklusive kolorierter Noten). Ein Vergleich mit rechter und linker Manuskriptseite – also alten und neuen Stimmen – zeigt, dass rechts zwar häufig Passagen dieser Art auftreten, jedoch auch die linke Seite nicht frei davon ist.[10] Auch große Instrumentalsprünge im Umfang von mindestens einer Septime kann man bei Alt und Neu feststellen, rechts allerdings doppelt so viele wie links.[11] Was also im Kernsatz schon angelegt ist, wird in den Zusatzstimmen noch bewusst verstärkt und ins Extrem getrieben. Also instrumentale Ausführung?

3. Hören: Vergleiche

Die moderne Aufnahmetechnik und ein florierender Musikmarkt machen es möglich, nicht nur *eine* qualitätvolle Einspielung von »Fortuna desperata« zur Verfügung zu haben, sondern gleich drei verschiedene. Da jede dieser Aufnahmen eigen ist in der Besetzung und Interpretation, lohnt ein genauer

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[8] Honey Meconi, »Poliziano, ›Primavera‹, and Perugia 431: New Light on ›Fortuna desperata‹«, in: Antoine Busnoys (wie Anm. 2), S. 465–503.

[9] Übersetzung nach *www.cpdl.org* (free choral sheet music).

[10] Auf der rechten Blatthälfte zählt man 37 solche Passagen (davon vier sogar mit Fusae), auf der linken zwei.

[11] Genau gezählt ist das Verhältnis 4: 2.

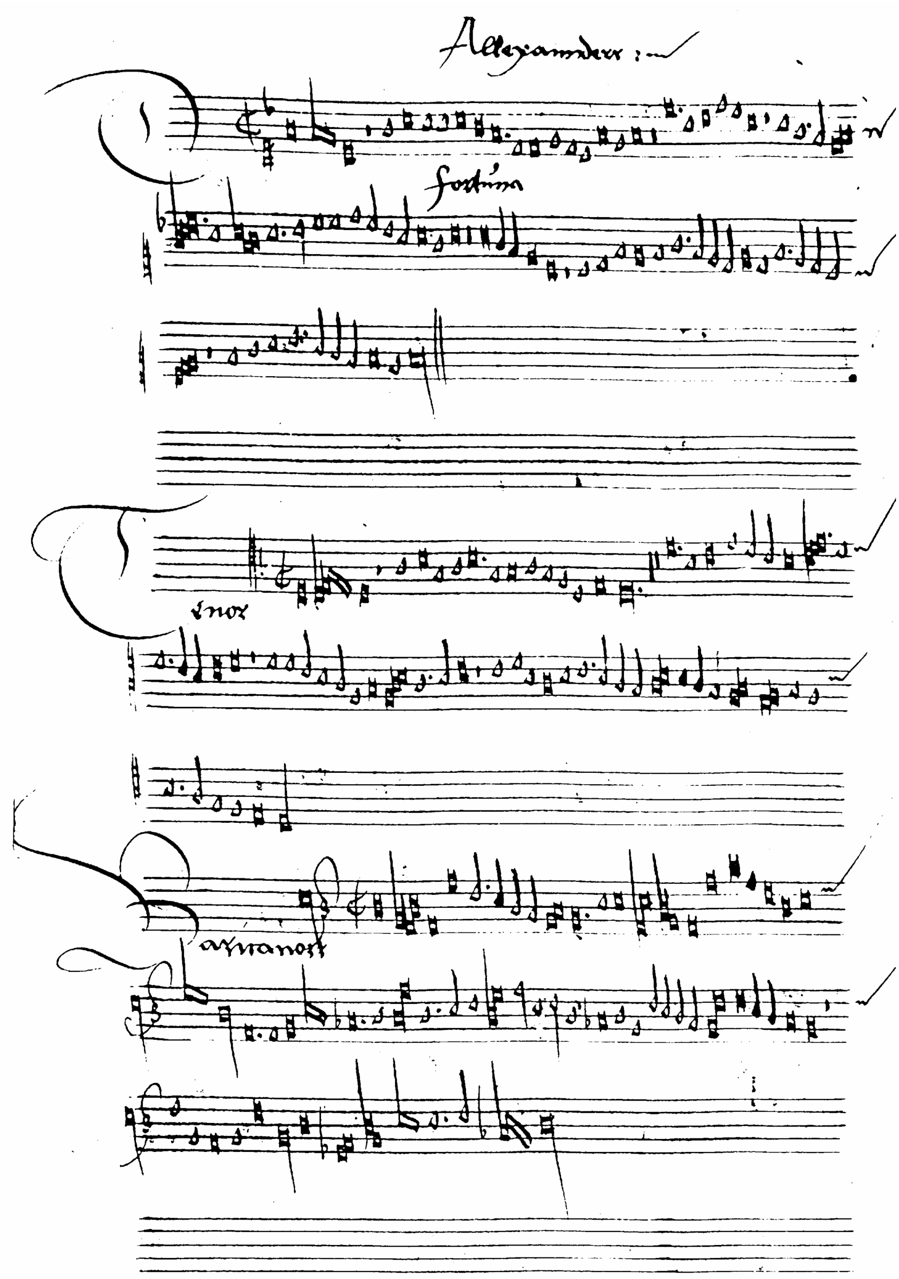
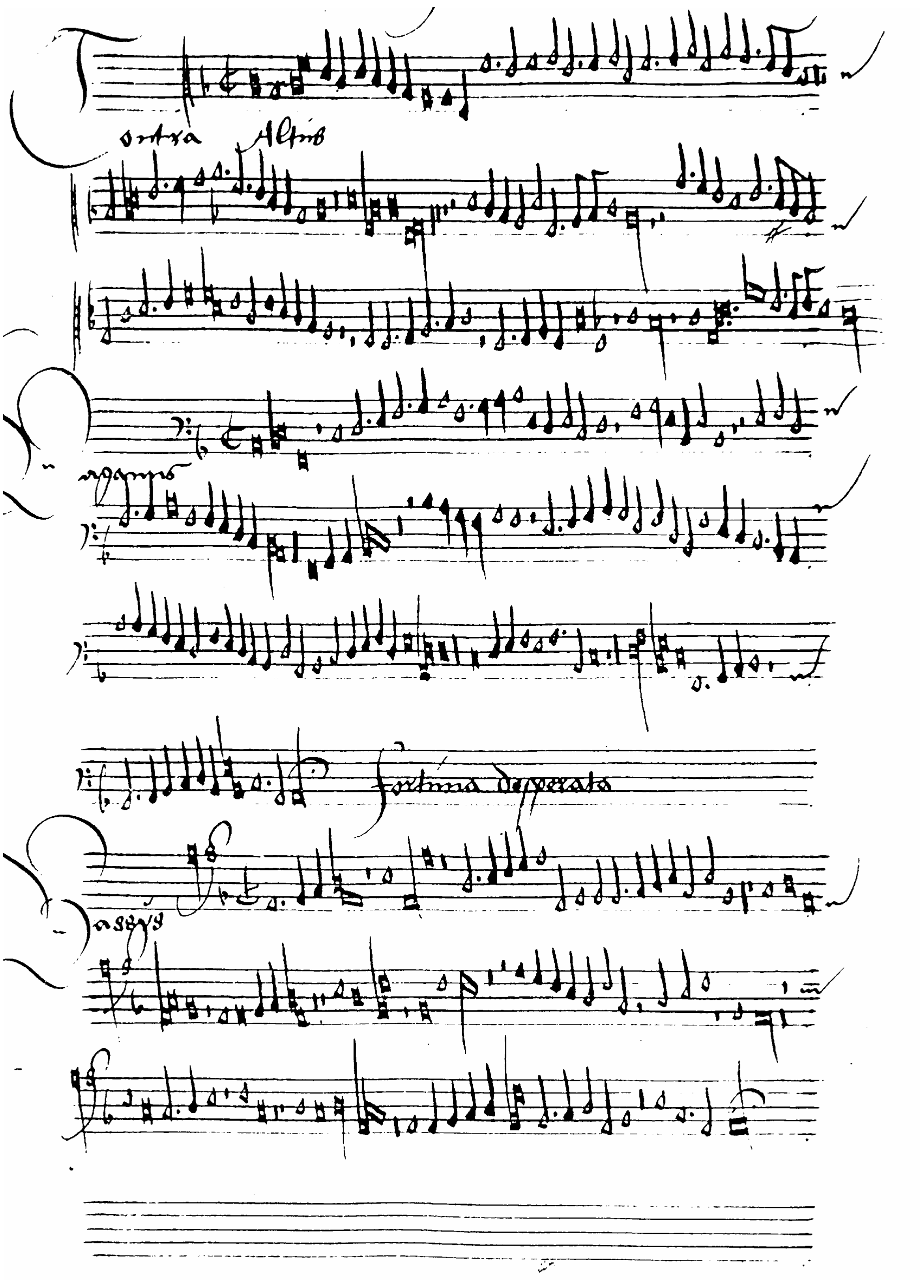

Alexander
fortuna
Tenor
Contratenor

Abbildung 1: Alexander Agricola, »Fortuna desperata« im *Augsburger Liederbuch*


Contra Altus
Fortuna desperata
Bassus

(D-As, 2° 142a, fol. 46^v–47^r)

Vergleich.[12] Bei den CD-Aufnahmen, allesamt Einspielungen der 1990er-Jahre, handelt es sich um:

1. *Alexander Agricola: Fortuna desperata. Secular Music of the 15th Century.* Ensemble Unicorn, Michael Posch. Naxos (Early Music/Alte Musik) 1995
2. *A. Agricola. Chansons.* Ferrara Ensemble, Crawford Young. Deutsche harmonia mundi 1990
3. *Alexander Agricola (1446–1506). A Secret Labyrinth*, Huelgas Ensemble, Paul van Nevel. Sony Classic (music for you) 1998

Die Aufnahmen sind vor allem hinsichtlich der Besetzung grundverschieden. Bei Nr. 1 (Ensemble Unicorn) finden wir eine gemischte Besetzung, wobei der ›Ursatz‹ vokal, die hinzugefügten Stimmen instrumental ausgeführt werden; bei Nr. 2 (Ferrara Ensemble) werden alle Stimmen mit Saiteninstrumenten besetzt, gezupft und gestrichen; und bei Nr. 3 (Huelgas Ensemble) hören wir einen rein vokalen Satz in drei Strophen.

Der folgende Interpretationsvergleich orientiert sich an jenen Fragen, die Nicole Schwindt in ihrem Einführungstext zur Tagung formuliert hat:

- Wie funktioniert die Mischung unterschiedlicher klanglicher Idiome? Entstehen gerade daraus neue ästhetische Qualitäten?
- Welche Konsequenzen hat die stilistische Überblendung, wenn man die Musik in unterschiedlichen Besetzungen realisiert?
- Kann man daraus womöglich objektive und nachvollziehbare Optionen und Empfehlungen für konkrete Ensemblezusammenstellungen ableiten?

Beim Hören geht es zunächst nicht um diese differenzierten Fragen, sondern um einen anderen, grundlegender Parameter, der sich als erster starker Eindruck in den Vordergrund drängt: das unterschiedliche Tempo. Die mittlere, rein instrumentale Interpretation von Crawford Young und seinem Ensemble ist etwa um die Hälfte schneller als die beiden vokalen Aufnahmen[13] und vermittelt schon allein dadurch eine ganz andere Stimmung. Durch den Einsatz von gezupften Instrumenten in den oberen vier Stimmen wirkt der

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[12] Im Vortrag wurden alle drei Aufnahmen nacheinander gespielt und mit dem Publikum gemeinsam diskutiert. Die folgenden Erkenntnisse sind von diesen Wortmeldungen geleitet. Ich bedanke mich für alle Beiträge.

[13] In Metronomzahlen gemessen und auf die Semibrevis bezogen hat Nr. 1 MM 68, Nr. 2 MM 96 und Nr. 3 MM 69. Die zeitliche Länge einer Strophe beträgt entsprechend 1:53, 0:57 bzw. 1:54 Minuten.

Satz hier dünner, das Tempo muss so schnell genommen werden, um die Linien nicht abreißen zu lassen. Zudem treten durch die spezifische Besetzung die schnellen Noten der ergänzten Stimmen sehr viel stärker hervor und füllen gleichsam die klanglichen Lücken, die beim Zupfen der Stimmen des ›Ursatzes‹ entstehen. Ein leicht vituos-instrumentales Moment, das man besser als manuelle Spielfreude bezeichnen möchte, ist dieser Interpretation zu Eigen.

Beinahe ein anderes Stück meint man zu hören, wenn unmittelbar anschließend die dritte Aufnahme mit der Interpretation des Huelgas Ensembles unter Paul van Nevel erklingt. Der leichte ›drive‹ der vorangegangenen Einspielung weicht einem getragenen, sensitiven Vokalsatz, der aus einer völlig anderen Welt kommt. Das Ohr sucht nach den schnellen rhythmischen Spielfiguren und findet sie als sanftes Gleiten der Vokalstimmen wieder. Man ist beeindruckt von dem hohen stimmtechnischen Niveau und erlebt die klanglichen Spannungen, die durch die Feinintonation der Stimmen ermöglicht wird, als neue Qualität der Komposition.

Geht man nun wiederum auf die erste Interpretation des Ensembles Unicorn unter der Leitung von Michael Posch zurück, so stellt sich ein interessanter Effekt ein. Obwohl beide Einspielungen gleich lang sind, wirkt jene mit der vokal-instrumental gemischten Besetzung um einiges schneller. Dieser Eindruck dürfte mit der viel offeneren Stimmgebung der Sänger zusammenhängen, aber auch mit dem direkten Zugriff auf den Notentext, also eigentlich einer ästhetischen Haltung. Die Tatsache, dass die drei »si placet«-Stimmen von Agricola mit Streichinstrumenten besetzt sind, scheint dabei nur indirekt eine Rolle zu spielen. Der Klang der Fidel und der beiden Vihuelas d'arco ist gegenüber den dominierenden Gesangsstimmen stark zurückgenommen, sie untermalen eher den ›Ursatz‹ als dass sie ihm etwas Gleichwertiges entgegenstellen. Außerdem wirkt der Vokalsatz gegenüber der vokalen Aufnahme lockerer.

Damit kommen wir schon zur ersten Frage, die sich aufgrund dieser drei unterschiedlichen Interpretationen aufdrängt: nämlich, wie weit soll man analytisch besetzen, bzw. wie weit soll man mit der Besetzung ein analytisches Hören unterstützen? In der eben genannten Einspielung von Unicorn ist dies offensichtlich ein Anliegen, das durchaus legitim ist. Allerdings wurde dabei, wie erwähnt, keine klangliche Ausgewogenheit erzielt und damit die Bedeutung der kompositorischen Leistung Agricolas – die man angesichts der Vielzahl der verschiedenen Vertonungen von »Fortuna desperata« zweifellos im Hinzusetzen der »si placet«-Stimmen sehen muss – heruntergespielt. Bei den anderen beiden Einspielungen wird keine der sechs Stimmen durch eine spezifische Besetzung bevorzugt, meiner Ansicht nach ein genauso interessanter Zugang, der den vollstimmigen Satz ins Zentrum stellt und somit ›Ursatz‹ und Ergänzungen als neue Einheit erscheinen lässt.

Grundsätzlich bin ich der Meinung, dass Einzelstimmen, die als Grundlage einer neuen Komposition dienten (man denke etwa an die unterschiedlichen Vertonungen Agricolas von »De tous biens plaine«), sehr bewusst auf den Gesamtklang hin besetzt werden sollten. Geht man von einem Publikum aus, das die Lied- oder Choralmelodie *nicht* kennt, dann erscheint es angemessen, die betreffende Stimme so zu besetzen, dass sie klanglich mitverfolgbar, vielleicht sogar dominant erklingt. Diffiziler ist es freilich, wenn man mit der Bekanntheit einer Melodie spielen und gerade durch die Besetzung andere Klanglichkeiten der Komposition hervortreten lassen kann, als man es durch die etwas platte Standardinterpretation mit verstärkter ›Urstimme‹ gewohnt ist.[14] Das Neue im Alten – um wieder auf unser Generalthema zurückzukommen – ist immer ein besonderer Reiz. Und gerade das hat ja auch die Komponisten des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts dazu veranlasst, aus einem bestehenden, bewährten Satz Stimmen herauszulösen und daraus Neues zu gestalten.

Schließlich sei noch das Problem der Textbedeutung und Textausdeutung anhand der drei gewählten Interpretationsbeispiele angesprochen. Nur in der letzten, rein vokalen Aufnahme des Huelgas Ensembles wird die Klage über die tote Geliebte durch die Gehaltenheit der Stimmen, gekoppelt mit dem langsamen Tempo, im ästhetischen Gesamteindruck unmittelbar vermittelt. Auch ohne den Text zu kennen (oder zu verstehen), erfasst man intuitiv die emotionale Aussage und erinnert sich an Totenklagen von Komponisten, die auch Ulrich Brätel in seinem Liedtext nennt: Josquins »Nymphes des bois« und Ockeghems »Mort tu as navré«. Agricolas »Fortuna desperata« in der Vokalinterpretation hat viel stärker motettischen Charakter als eine Komposition, die als schlichtes ›Lied‹ verstanden sein will. Dieser Eindruck wird noch unterstützt durch einzelne Passagen mit forcierter Textausdeutung, die mit Hilfe von Musica ficta bzw. dem Verzicht darauf zustande kommen. Insbesondere die Textzeile mit den Worten »maledecta« (1. Strophe) bzw. »crudele« (2. Strophe) erfährt in der Interpretation von van Nevel und seinem Ensemble in Takt 10 eine für das Ohr wirklich »grausame« Intervallfolge *G–g–d’–b’ / g–h–d” / F–a–c’–c”* (siehe Notenbeispiel 2). Die beiden anderen Aufnahmen spielen hier, wie auch die Ausgabe im *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae* andeutet, ein b-Vorzeichen im Bassus I. Der Charakter einer Totenklage geht bei der Instrumentalaufnahme völlig verloren, in der gemischten Aufnahme ist er vorrangig durch das Tempo, weniger durch den klanglichen Eindruck vermittelt.

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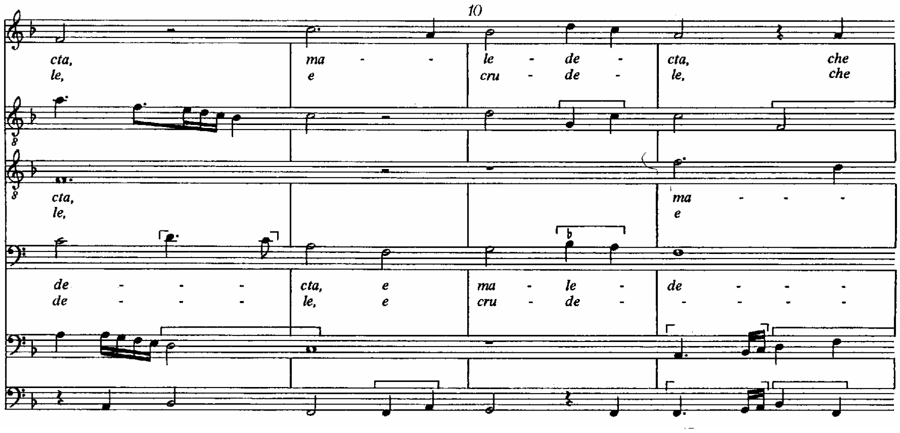
[14] Das gilt auch für ganz andere Repertoires, wie etwa der klassischen Klaviermusik. Beispielhaft findet man diesen Zugriff in den Interpretationen von Andras Schiff, der bei wiederholten Passagen gerne Melodielinien der linken Hand hervorhebt und dadurch in einer meist bestens bekannten Komposition Neues hervorzaubern kann.


10
cta, ma - - le - de - cta, che
le, e cru - de - le, che
cta, ma - - -
le, e
de - - - cta, e ma - le - de - - -
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Notenbeispiel 2: Alexander Agricola, »Fortuna desperata«, Takt 8–11[15]

Die Textvorlage einer Komposition bietet nicht nur einen Anstoß zur inhaltlichen Interpretation, sondern hat auch gliedernde Funktion, zum einen bezüglich der Abschnittsbildung, zum anderen aber auch die Großform betreffend.[16] Ein Lied mit drei Strophen, so meint man, sollte dreimal hintereinander, jeweils mit anderem Text, vorgetragen werden. Aber keine der drei Einspielungen hält sich an dieses Prinzip. Bei der gemischten Besetzung kannte man vielleicht nur den Text der ersten Strophe und ein einmaliger Durchlauf genügte. Bei der instrumentalen Interpretation scheint es wiederum wenig sinnvoll, textlos dreimal das Gleiche zu spielen. Aus anderen musikalischen Gründen hat man sich hier jedoch entschlossen, zumindest *eine* Wiederholung auszuführen und fügte beim fiktiven Strophenwechsel eine nette Übergangsfloskel ein. Die dritte, rein vokale Aufnahme schließlich bringt zwar tatsächlich alle drei Strophen, spielt dabei aber mit der ›Urform‹ als gestalterischem und klanglich reduziertem Element. Sie erklingt als Mittelteil einer symmetrischen Formgestalt mit dem Text der zweiten Strophe.

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[15] Wie Anm. 4, S. 69.

[16] Siehe dazu die anregenden theoretischen Überlegungen von Leeman L. Perkins, »Towards a Theory of Text-Music Relations in the Music of the Renaissance«, in: *Binchois Studies*, hrsg. von Andrew Kirkman und Dennis Slavin, Oxford 2000, S. 313–329.

5. Schlussbemerkungen

Der Vergleich der drei Einspielungen sollte keinesfalls zeigen, welche die beste oder gar ›die richtige‹ Interpretation ist. Vielmehr war es wichtig, im bewussten Hören nachzuvollziehen, wie sehr sich der Werkcharakter durch Besetzung – aber auch durch individuelle Interpretation – verändern kann, und welche Möglichkeiten sich hier eröffnen. Praktikern Empfehlungen für konkrete Ensemblezusammenstellungen zu geben, wäre nicht Sinn der Sache, sind es ja gerade die Vielfalt der Besetzungsvarianten und die daraus erwachsenen musikalischen Konsequenzen, die das weltliche Repertoire der Zeit so reich erscheinen lassen.

Abschließend soll neben den vokal-instrumentalen Ensemble-Interpretationen noch eine weitere Besetzungsvariante erwähnt werden, nämlich die der Intabulierungen. Sie schwinden allzu leicht aus dem Blickfeld, sind sie doch in eigener Notenschrift festgehalten, für das Instrument eingerichtet und oft nur einer schmalen Gruppe von Spezialisten bekannt. Meines Erachtens aber sollten sie in einer wissenschaftlichen Ausgabe als weitere Erscheinungsform einer Komposition ihren Platz gleichberechtigt neben der Ensemblefassung einnehmen und auch in Reihen wie den *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae* aufgenommen werden – auch wenn ihre Notationsform dem Reihentitel widerspricht. Ebenso wäre es längst an der Zeit, in den Sammeleditionen die kategoriale Unterscheidung zwischen Instrumental- und Vokalwerken fallen zu lassen, denn gerade damit untergräbt man den Schwebezustand der Kompositionen zwischen Vokal und Instrumental, und damit auch das interessante Wechselspiel zwischen Alt und Neu.

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